www.thevillage.co

Issue #228 October 2022

TheVillage

NEWS & FEATURES from Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Blackwell, Burcot Beoley, Cofton Hackett, Finstall, Hopwood, Bordesley, Rowney Green, Lickey, Lickey End, Marlbrook, The Oakalls & everywhere in between!

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

• WARMER IN WINTER • COOLER IN SUMMER

Our lightweight insulated panels make your conservatory:

- **Warmer** in winter • **Cooler** in summer • **Reduce** bills
- **Quieter** in bad weather • Installed in less than a day

To find out more about the benefits that the Green Space system can offer and see if your conservatory is suitable for any potential subsidies, contact us now.

CONTACT-FREE

We can offer **contact-free** installations, and perform these in less than a day!

"It's the best home improvement we have ever made. Our conservatory is now our dining room in the garden."

Mike Millis, Middleton On Sea

Green Space UK
CONSERVATORY ROOFS

Get a price for your conservatory roof

0800 08 03 202

www.greenspaceconservatories.co.uk

MADE IN BRITAIN

TEN YEARS GUARANTEE

*Finance subject to status, T&C's apply. Subsidies are limited by area and not guaranteed. Putting off your enquiry could reduce the potential subsidy available to you

Barnt Green Pre-School

Barnt Green Preschool

Barnt Green's Charity run preschool
Investing everything in your child's future

PLACES AVAILABLE AGES 2+

CALL - 07790 017 777
EMAIL - barntgreenpreschool@gmail.com

Term time, Monday – Thursday, 8.45am – 3pm
(We are also able to offer half days and wrap around care)
Please contact us for further information

barntgreenpreschool.co.uk

Ofsted Good Provider

ARDEN BRIDGE SERVICES

MOT TESTING STATION

Servicing & Repairs
for all makes & models

TYRES
Supplied & Fitted

- MOT Testing Station
- Latest Diagnostic Equipment
- Collection & Delivery Service
- Courtesy Cars Available

Tel: 01564 742451 www.ardenbridge.com

Hill Top Garage, Alcester Road, Beoley, B98 9EP

An Independent Family Owned Funeral Directors

THOMAS BROTHERS

Family owned funeral homes in Redditch, Wythall, Alvechurch, Bromsgrove & Alcester.
We provide a friendly, dignified service paying special attention to detail.

REDDITCH • BROMSGROVE
01527 547777 01527 831700

WYTHALL • ALVECHURCH • ALCESTER
01564 822001 0121 445 3422 01789 330939

"A family concern"

www.thomasbrothers.co.uk
email: admin@thomasbrothers.co.uk

TheVillage Issue 228 October 2022

inside

Bringing you village life for 24 years

Editorial:
Francesca Peach
Richard Peach

The Limes
Alvechurch
Worcestershire
B48 7RR

Tel: 0121 445 6757

email:
editor@villageonline.co.uk

Follow us on Instagram:
@thevillagemag

To advertise in TheVillage

Call Sales:

07536 987950
0121 445 6757

email:
fran@villageonline.co.uk

visit:
www.thevillage.co

The Village (ISSN 1466-3376) is published by Platform Publishing & Media Ltd (Reg Office: 87 Hewell Rd, Barnt Green, B45 8NL) and printed by Buxton Press in Derbyshire. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written consent is prohibited. The publishers do not accept responsibility for any errors made in advertisements or for claims made by any advertisers which are incorrect. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason. All material submitted for publication is done so at the owner's risk and no responsibility is accepted by the publisher for its return.

Get ready to Spook
Page 11

Health & Beauty
Pages 15-17

Blackwell Rocks
Pages 28-29

A Tribute to Hannah
Pages 36-37

Rowney on Show
Pages 38-40

Cover: Autumn's arrival
by Dennis Brown, of Hopwood

BDLT

BDLT SCAFFOLDING AND ROOFING

We are a family business with over 40 years in the industry, covering your scaffolding/roofing requirements & your health and safety needs when working at heights.

Call our office: 0121 752 2020
Email: info@bdlt.co.uk

Quay Place, Edwards Street,
Birmingham, B1 2RA

Villagers gathered in Millennium Park, Barnt Green, applaud after the Proclamation of King Charles III, read by Coun Robert Cholmondeley, chairman of Barnt Green Parish Council.

When the Queen stayed over in Barnt Green: See Page 12

OPEN MEETING TO FIND VOLUNTEERS FOR COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS HELP

Village 'larder' plan

Village volunteers are coming together to ensure no one goes hungry during the growing cost-of-living crisis. They are setting up an "Alvechurch Community Larder" with the aim of stopping food waste and helping the community

A steering group has already been formed. They told *The Village*: "For Alvechurch to be able to support local folk suffering the cost-of-living crisis, we need volunteers both for practical jobs and to join the steering group."

An open meeting is to be held at Alvechurch Village Hall on November 2 at 7.30pm for people to find out more and offer their help.

The steering group said the idea had first been raised at the Lent course of Alvechurch Churches Together, adding: "Our vision is to set up a Community Larder in Alvechurch which will help residents with the developing cost-of-living crisis and also help to reduce food waste.

"We have visited community larders in our area, to see the different ways of providing food, including The Pantry Franchise, The Community Fridge, Hubub and Fairshare.

"As a result, we propose to start an independent organisation in our village. It will provide the venue and management, using Fairshare, and maybe Hubub, too, to provide the food." The aim is to start in December.

"Currently our steering group has four members but we wish to add three or four more people to represent village interests and to assist us in our development, to make decisions, to ensure the larder meets all legislation requirements and is financially secure."

Alvechurch Baptist Church has agreed to the use of their small hall, opening for part of one day per week at first.

"The Larder is not a food bank: no referral is needed to use it. People who pay a small weekly 'registration fee' would be entitled to £20 worth of food," the group added.

"At the open meeting on the 2nd November we will outline the plan, answer questions and hopefully excite you enough to volunteer."

A Sunday to remember

ALVECHURCH is combining its remembrance commemorations with a service on Remembrance Sunday organised by St Laurence Church, Alvechurch Parish Council and the Alvechurch Services Association.

It will be held in St Laurence Church at 10am on November 13 and at the Memorial Green from 10.30am. Bear Hill will be closed to traffic up to Snake Lane between 10.15am and 11.30am

The Rev Gail Rogers said: "In previous years we have remembered by name all who died in world wars. This year, we would like to include the names of those from the parish who have died in conflicts since."

To add a name, email revdgail@icloud.com with their details.

LANDONS
Bathrooms • Kitchens • Bedrooms • Tiles

Landon House. The Crossroads, Kidderminster Road,
(A448). Dodford, Bromsgrove. B61 9DU
Tel 01527 882939 www.landoninteriors.co.uk Founded 1957
Open Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm Sat 10am - 4pm

See where the sewage flows

A *Village* reader has highlighted the problems of sewage being released into waterways running through our area.

Using information gleaned from the Rivers Trust, he has pointed out that it isn't just a problem for the south coast of England.

"It is also happening much nearer to home – sewage is being released into the River Arrow around Alvechurch and Barnt Green," the reader explained.

"Information from the Rivers Trust documents that Alvechurch Sewage works discharged into the Arrow 50 times in 2021, for a total of 454 hours.

"In the main village of Alvechurch, sewer storm drains on Radford Road spilled 34 times, for a total of 52 hours.

"Upstream of Alvechurch, and therefore flowing through The Meadows, a sewer storm drain in Barnt Green also overflowed eight times," he said.

All of this discharge then flowed down the Arrow, through the Needle Forge Park and Arrow Valley Park in Redditch.

He added: "I believe that the residents of Barnt Green and Alvechurch should be aware that their foul water treatment is being handled so poorly at the moment.

"This will have an effect not only on the wildlife inhabiting our streams and rivers, but also the people who use the water in these parks to exercise themselves, their children and their pets "

■ To see reported spillages for yourself, see the interactive map at www.theriverstrust.org

MEMBERS of the Holy Trinity church congregation in Lickey (above) enjoy a light-hearted moment during a visit by the newly appointed Anglican Bishop of Bolivia.

Bishop Walter Toro and his wife Adela (second row, in the centre) were spending time in Birmingham after a conference in London.

The Diocese of Bolivia is the most recent global link with the worldwide church and to commemorate the occasion the Community Garden at St Catherine's Church, Blackwell, had a raised bed planted up in the colours of the Bolivian flag. Picture/*Keith Woolford*

Park drama: The charity air ambulance lands in Crown Meadow playing fields, Alvechurch, (above) while paramedics attend to a patient in Swan's Walk. Picture/*Marc Worral*

Privacy pledge

BEOLEY'S Portway residents living on Billesley Lane have been assured their privacy will be protected when a temporary CCTV camera is installed outside the Rose and Crown public house in the lane.

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership is installing the camera for three months to assess antisocial behaviour concerns. Residents have been assured privacy zones would be active in front of private windows.

***VILLAGE* adventurer Alan Bailes, of Bordesley, has embarked on a trekking and cycling challenge to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital, where his granddaughter Immy, now aged six, underwent open-heart surgery.**

Alan, aged 71, has already trekked 75km through the Balkan Alps, with more than 4,000m of ascent, and will be cycling across Cuba before a trek through the Sahara. See his just giving page at justgiving.com/fundraising/Alan-Bailes1

Christmas fayre

ALVECHURCH Village Hall is holding a Christmas Craft Fayre on Sunday November 13 from 10am-4pm with refreshments served downstairs. Entrance is £1. All proceeds go towards maintenance of the hall.

LUXURY TRADITIONAL AND MODERN BESPOKE KITCHENS

Visit our website for photos and videos of our installations.

Buy direct from an established family business that has been manufacturing kitchens since 1974.

BROADWAY BESPOKE KITCHENS EST. 1974

A Family Business of Three Generations

Consultants of GRAND DESIGNS LIVE BIRMINGHAM

INDUSTRY PARTNER

houzz 2020 DESIGN houzz 2019 DESIGN houzz 2018 DESIGN houzz 2020 SERVICE houzz 2019 SERVICE houzz 2018 SERVICE

Call or visit our showroom to discuss your new kitchen.
TELEPHONE: 0121 353 4999
SHOWROOM: 138 Hardwick Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 3DP
www.bespokekitchensbybroadway.co.uk

Scarecrows creeping on to the streets

SCARY monsters, witches and other spooky figures will soon be popping up in dark corners and front gardens around a village's streets.

The Alvechurch Scarecrow Festival is back for a third year, again raising money for The Lounge community project in the village centre.

Organisers are hoping for another good turnout after almost 100 scarecrows were entered last year, raising £2,798 through the entrance fee and sale of maps guiding people around the village's scary sights.

Megan Clayton, who launched the festival in 2020, said it was taking place this year during school half-term from October 24-30.

"We have some fantastic prizes for the winning scarecrows, including restaurant vouchers, family day out vouchers, beauty treatment vouchers, cupcake or cookie cake voucher, hampers and many more," Megan told *The Village*.

The cost to enter a scarecrow is £5 and a map, physical or digital, is £2.

This can be paid either directly at The Lounge or via the justgiving page: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/alvechurch-scarecrows1
See Facebook for further details.

Royal night in Barnt Green

Village duty: Barnt Green Parish Council chairman Robert Cholmondeley reads the Proclamation of King Charles III, flanked by (from left) parish councillor Philip Perry, county councillor Adrian Kriss and district councillor Charles Hotham.

AS THE people of Barnt Green gathered to hear the Proclamation of King Charles III, they may not have been aware that the young Queen Elizabeth II once spent the night in the village.

The tale was told by Gavin Bantock in the book *Hail Salubrious Spot*, compiled with his siblings about their lives growing up in Barnt Green. In it, he describes "the steep grassy embankment of the railway line, almost as high as two houses" near the railway bridge and "a fine array of sidings, where cattle were sometimes loaded or off-loaded from or for the market at the far end of the village".

These sidings, he writes, were also occasionally used by Royal Trains, whose occupants would spend a quiet night there.

Gavin wrote: "I well remember, in 1953 or 1954, assembling with a large number of villagers quite early in the morning on the road below and waiting for the young Queen Elizabeth II – this would be not long after her June 1953 coronation – to appear at one of the train windows, and her wide smile as she waved to us.

"It seems that the Queen's father, King George VI, also spent a night in the same Barnt Green sidings some years before that. In fact my mother told us that the sidings had been built in the 1930s exclusively for the use of Royal Trains.

"Such occasions were days to remember, though not remembered by people living in Barnt Green today," remarked Gavin. "An avenue of new houses, with the highly original name Greenbank Gardens has now been gouged out of the railway embankment and the sidings area."

Right: *Hail Salubrious Spot: Memories of a Worcestershire Village*, published 2010.

20 From The Village archive Years Ago

THE COVER of our October 2002 issue was taken by Jo Cound, of a beautiful oak tree in the Lickey Hills Country Park, which had a range of outdoor events on that autumn including exploring the night sky with telescopes and a walk organised by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

60 YEARS IN BLOOM!
Rowney Green Hoticultural Society celebrated its diamond anniversary, and held its 60th Annual Flower Show in September. Held in the Peace Hall, the show was attended by visitors from far and wide and demonstrated a real slice of community spirit, as well as a diamond celebration of the virtues and delights of gardening.

BARNT GREEN PLANS PROTEST CONVOY
A packed public meeting was urged to join a convoy to Bromsgrove District Council's offices when councillors were to decide if 12 acres of fields around the Barnt Green Inn should be earmarked for up to 250 new homes. Bromsgrove District Council wanted to designate the land as an 'Area of Development Restraint' which would take the land out of the Green Belt for future release for development. Coun Susan Whitehead, Barnt Green Parish Council's planning spokesman, told the meeting at the Barnt Green Parish Hall that they hoped "the sheer pressure of large numbers of people could help the cause". The public opposition to the plan included a 1,450 name petition.

10 From The Village archive Years Ago

THE COVER of our October 2012 issue featured the bowtop wagon painstakingly restored by Tony Cowles, of Rowney Green, and friends over a number of years. Inside, we told the story of how Tony learned from the horse-drawn traveller community of this area.

SNAKES ALIVE!
Kieran Blaber of Alvechurch introduces his unusual collection of pet snakes including boa constrictors, black rat snakes and a carpet python. Sian Yarwood Smith of Townsend Veterinary Practice also advises on snake care and how to treat poisonous snake bites.

GHOST STORIES including the *White Lady*, a story about the Barnt Green Inn, built in the 17th century and originally known as Barnt Green House. From Anne Bradford's book *Haunted Pubs of Worcestershire*, Mike Lowe tells all about the encounters both he and his father had with the White Lady, and the supposed underground tunnel running from Barnt Green to Cofton Hall.

HOPWOOD- BASED ARTIST Paula Hamilton met with the Lickey Hills Art Society, a friendly group of artists and art lovers in advance of their annual art exhibition. The meeting was buzzing with activity and experts giving demonstrations in watercolours (pictured left is watercolourist Stuart Hudson), seascapes using wax to create texture, chalk pastels and more!

Advertisement

VHK
WOMENS HEALTH

Experts in all Stages of Menopause Care

For many women, the perimenopausal journey starts during their forties. Women may still be having regular periods despite fluctuating hormone levels, making it harder to recognise this as a cause of their symptoms. Anxiety, mood fluctuations, joint pains, fatigue, and palpitations often present earlier than the better-known night sweats and hot flushes. It comes as no surprise that this life transition can have a significant effect on personal relationships and working life.

Women often report how a holistic approach, where they feel both informed and supported, can enable them to take control of their symptoms and improve quality of life.

VHK Women's Health Clinic offers women the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion about symptoms and the treatment options that may be best suited to them. Finding a tailored approach with a combination of lifestyle, body-identical HRT or non-hormonal evidenced based medication is key to symptom control and improvement in quality of life.

Dr Hobbs and Dr Kerr, each have over 20 years of experience of medical menopause management and can use their extensive knowledge to create a bespoke management plan for all their patients. Both are active members of the British Menopause Society and registered with the General Medical Council.

For Bookings please visit
www.vhkwomenshealth.com

General Medical Council

Regulated by CareQuality Commission

VHK Womens Health Clinic
BHI Parkside | Stourbridge Road
Bromsgrove | B61 0AZ

Beauty at your fingertips

LIVING in North Worcestershire, less than half an hour by train to the centre of Birmingham for many of us, there is a huge variety of choice in the health, wellness and beauty sector.

But there's no need to look or travel far . . . whether you're looking for an outdoor group fitness class, a local physiotherapist or a makeup artist, more and more businesses focused on wellbeing and beauty are popping up in the area, and some have been established for many years.

For some, their health and beauty businesses start as a "side hustle" alongside other jobs. For others, it's been years of training and dreaming and saving in the making of their business. However, one fact is clear; the desire and need for them is there.

After the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic ended, people rushed to the places that made them feel normal and "like themselves" again. This was overwhelmingly the beauty industry. Hairdressers were booked up for months, not accepting new clients, people were finally able to get their regular facial treatment, or eyebrows threaded, the beauty industry was thriving once more (of course, until the next lockdown happened).

Above: A fresh set of nails by Lunatips based in Cofton Hackett.

They were some of the most stringent rule followers of the "new normal": masks, gloves, perspex screens, limiting clients. They were also some of the businesses hit the hardest, and some of the most generous and resilient (for example Zoe, owner of Bliss in Alvechurch offered free haircuts to NHS Heroes) and we're lucky that so many local to us have loyal customers and talented staff.

Of course, the strain the pandemic – and let's face it, the rest of the issues in the world at the moment – have had a huge impact on peoples health and mental wellbeing.

So people to turn to exercise, to opportunities to practise mindfulness and to those who can provide help, such as therapists and trained experts who can help us all work through the struggles we carry.

Whether you're looking for a one-off appointment or someone to visit weekly, there are so many services available in the villages we live in.

Advertisement

Lunatips
NAILS, BEAUTY, COSMETICS & TRAINING

We're a local beauty salon based in Cofton Hackett and we pride ourselves on providing a super friendly, yet professional environment for our clientele. The expertise of our therapists combined with the products we use, make us a first choice for most.

We have a team of 5 passionate, experienced therapists, each with their own area of expertise. We all love what we do and providing our clients with a relaxing and high quality experience. When you get in touch, our fantastic receptionist will ensure you are placed with the most experienced person for the treatment you are interested in. Call us to have a chat about any treatments or to book an appointment.

Our wide range of treatments include:
- Gel Manicures
- Pedicures
- Massage
- Lash Lifting
- Hair Removal including Threading and Electrolysis

We are proud to be one of very few CACI Clinics in the area offering non surgical electrical solutions for the face and body.
We also specialise in non electrical facials. The two combined mean we can bespoke your face and body requirements completely to obtain the results you are looking for.

Book now: 0121 448 1811 I Visit: www.lunatipsnails.com
Instagram: @lunatipsnailstd I Facebook: lunatipsnails

Embrace
The MWord
INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP
Our one hour workshop will help you gain the insights you need to own your menopause journey and transform your future.
£10
Thursday 27 October | 7-8pm
Reserve you place at joolismfitness.co.uk
joolism fitness

NR Aesthetics & Skin
Nicky Robinson is a NMC registered Nurse & Midwife Prescriber providing Anti-wrinkle Treatments, Dermal fillers, IPRF Hair regeneration, Medical Skin Care, Microneedling, Profhilo skin boosters and Chemical peels
British Association of Cosmetic Nurses
Aesthetic Expert Complications Group
Call: 07843 047688
Email: info@nraestheticsandskin.co.uk
Visit: www.nraestheticsandskin.co.uk
Instagram&Facebook: @nraestheticsandskin

Lickey Hills Hypnotherapy
for Women
Deborah Glover (Dip Clin Hyp)
GHR Registered Clinical Hypnotherapist
No: 7317(A)
Depression/Anxiety/Panic Attacks
Grief/Loss/Insomnia/PTSD/OCD
Pain Management & Living with Chronic Illness
Symptoms of Menopause and PMS
Face-to-Face and On-line Sessions available
Tel: 07866564724 | Email: lickeyhillshypnotherapy@gmail.com
www.lickeyhillshypnotherapy.co.uk

TOP BROW
Eyebrow Microblading
Registered & licensed with KB Pro, the UK's leading authority in semi-permanent makeup.
Bespoke eyebrow treatments:
- Microblading (hairstrokes)
- Ombré (powder) brows
- Combination brows
- Shaping, tinting and artistry
Ru:07990 787447 www.top-brow.com @topbrowbirmingham

King's Worcester

Independent education for boys and girls aged 16-18

Shaping ambition, resilience and curiosity.

Sixth Form Open Morning

Saturday 19th November

King's is a truly special place. Preparation for life, academic excellence and character-building opportunities are at the heart of our Sixth Form. We seek to inspire kind, ambitious, and curious young adults who have the determination and resilience to achieve their very best and more.

Join us at our Open Morning, where you can explore our enviable Sixth Form facilities, hear about our exciting new Sixth Form centre plans, meet our ambitious students and talk to our extraordinary, dedicated teachers.

Register your visit: ksw.org.uk/shapedbykings

#ShapedByKings

Outstanding results for King's Worcester pupils

The King's School, Worcester was delighted to recognise the achievements of this year's A level students, who achieved outstanding results despite the challenge and disruption of the last two years. Overall a record 53 Sixth Form students each achieved three or more grades at A or A*. In all, 26% of grades were A*, 54% of results achieved were A*- A and 94% graded A*-C.

The Headmaster, Gareth Doodes praised the cohort on their achievements: "The fortitude and resilience of our students, who before this summer had never sat public exams, have been outstanding. These stellar results are a testament to the hard work and commitment of this year group. Our hybrid offering throughout the pandemic enabled these Sixth Formers and teachers to work from home whilst isolating, ensuring continuity of learning. I will be forever grateful for the work of our teachers who, despite the challenges of COVID, have continued to deliver an exceptional standard of education."

In addition to A levels, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results were outstanding, with 63% awarded A* grades, and 87% A* - A, achieved by 38 students on a diverse range of questions. Equivalent to half an A level, the EPQ allows students to undertake in-depth research in an area of personal interest, enabling them to stand out in their university applications and develop extra skills.

This year group was one of the largest A level cohorts the King's Sixth Form has seen, with 142 students taking 458 A levels. Of particular note are the 16 students who received straight A*s, including Head of School Charlotte Morgan, who will read Medicine at Cambridge, Head of School Josh Richardson, who will read Mechanical with Automotive Engineering at Bath, Senior Scholar Luke Beever, who will study Engineering at Cambridge, and Tom Kingsford-Dowd, who will be heading to the University of Southampton to read Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Many King's Sixth Formers have now moved onto higher education, including four students who received confirmed places at Cambridge, five offers to study medical or veterinary-related degrees, 21 engineering offers, and full scholarships to Stanford and the University of Iowa in the US. Other King's students have gone onto study a wide range of other subjects at leading institutions including Law, Architecture, Business and Economics, Geography, Maths, History and Product Design.

Commitment: King's Worcester sixth form students.

Pride slipping in Cofton

Dear Editor – I used to be proud to say to anyone that I lived in Cofton Hackett. But this is no longer the case, due to the lack of maintenance work being carried out to footpaths, drains, the village green and also The Lickey Hills.

If you walk along Barnt Green Road at its junction with Ten Ashes Lane, towards the Rose Hill island, the footpath is in such a state that it could be dangerous and slippery in wet weather and cause pedestrians to need to step into the busy road.

The Rose Hill roundabout has weeds growing taller that the railings around the island, and trees near to the village green are growing across the footpath causing pedestrians to stoop to avoid walking into branches.

A complaint has been raised with the council without any action being taken to tidy up the area or clearing blocked drains which will no doubt cause floods (similar to that seen in Barnt Green recently) once the heavy rains arrive.

Overhanging trees from The Lickey Hills are also being struck by high sided vehicles travelling on Barnt Green Road which has caused 7ft branches to come crashing down against fences of adjoining houses. It is only a matter of time before a branch crashes on to a vehicle, cyclist or pedestrian using this stretch of road. The council have not even acknowledged a report of this problem.

We pay enough in our council tax bills for maintenance to be carried out in our village and make it beautiful again.

Cofton Hackett Resident

Slow them down

Dear Editor – We have lived in the beautiful village of Barnt Green for nearly 30 years now and obviously the village as grown and evolved, which we would expect, but we have noticed on Bittell Road the traffic is going so fast at times vehicles nearly mount the pavement on the bend, which is extremely dangerous, and at night cars are almost racing up through the village.

I have seen while driving through Alvechurch that they have worked extremely hard to put traffic calming measures in with a new sign which flashes asking the traffic to slow down.

I think they have done tremendously well and wonder if our parish council could recommend some of these measures on the busy roads in our area.

Long-standing resident
Bittell Road, Barnt Green

Home win

Dear Editor – As co-secretary of Beoley Village Football Club, I would like to thank Jayne Smailes and Fay Murphy from Alvechurch Parish Council for all their help over the past weeks.

My club had to find a new home ground for this season at very short notice and they went way above and beyond the call of duty in accommodating our move to the Wiggin Memorial Playing Field.

A big thank you as well to Sally from the Alvechurch Inn who is allowing us to use the car park and also providing changing facilities for us and our opponents before and after our Sunday morning games.

We are looking forward to becoming part of the Alvechurch community and would welcome any local support at our Sunday morning home games.

Richard Ball, Beoley Village FC

Have your say . . . about anything!

email: editor@villageonline.co.uk
or write to: Letters, The Village,
The Limes, Swan Street, Alvechurch B48 7RR

Please include your name and address – even if you request them to be withheld from publication. We reserve the right to edit submissions for reasons of space or legality.
The deadline for the next issue is October 14th 2022.

WHERE'S VINNY?

SIX-YEAR-OLD Amelia Price, of Alvechurch, a pupil at Crown Meadow First School, shows the Mini Vinny she won in our hunt the hedgehog competition.

If you want to win one for yourself, you'll need to try to find the little hedgehog hiding somewhere in this magazine (the one shown above is just a guide!)

Tell us where he's hiding via phone, email or post – see details on bottom of the page opposite – and please include your contact details, especially if leaving a voicemail message, and we'll draw a winner at random.

The closing date is midnight on October 12. We'll let you know if you've won and you can collect your Mini Vinny from our office – and pose for a photo with your prize!

Hannah's legacy

Dear Editor – We were saddened to hear that Hannah Genders had died. We had met her through these pages, both as a a columnist and advertiser.

We engaged Hannah to design our garden, having recently moved to Hopwood. She told us that she wouldn't work with clients who would not support sustainability!

She fashioned a beautiful garden with woodwork from a fallen Worcestershire oak tree, endemic Worcestershire plant species and all irrigated by harvested rain. Her legacy to us, even though we now live in

continues overleaf

The Village *View* . . .

This column was about to launch into a predicable rant about the bonkers state of the country – I mean, what on earth is going on out there?

Aha! you say, he's using the first person . . . and it's true, whoever has written *The Village View* in the past has maintained the traditional perspective of the "leading article", as some newspapers still call it.

This may (or may not) change in future issues of *The Village*. For after almost 25 years of keeping the show on the road as either Editor or Publisher, I'm gradually stepping aside.

I'll not try to cover all of those years here; perhaps that will be something to do this time next year on the 25th anniversary of the first issue of *The Village* magazine?

But back then, in October 1998, I wrote: "*The Village* has no allegiance to any political party, nor any axe to grind; it is independent, there are no vested interests to consider, no shareholders to please; it is committed to serving its readers."

Some of that sounds a bit pompous and over the top now, but they were different times, before anyone with a phone could become a publisher on a whim.

It was a responsibility I took seriously then and have done so ever since. Whatever hue has been in power in London, I have only ever been interested in how decisions there affect us here in these lovely villages.

This has meant, of course, that protecting the Green Belt has been Priority #1.

It is a simple fact that developers will make a lot more money a lot more easily if they can build houses on clean, green fields in desirable areas.

We are their target and should never cease to be on guard and to deflect their attentions towards the cities, where they can still make vast sums of money – just not quite so much or quite so easily.

But, as I wrote back in 1998, the main reason for launching *The Village* was to celebrate the remarkable community spirit so abundant in this area. I think we have done this and seen it grow.

I know the person taking the reins of *The Village* over the coming months is also a big supporter of this community, especially because she grew up here (going to school in Alvechurch and Bromsgrove) and is now bringing up a family of her own here.

It will be a challenge for her, as the economy bottoms out and the cost of printing a magazine soars, but we've come through tough economic times before.

And who is this new broom, you ask? Her name is Francesca Peach – and, yes, she's my daughter.

Richard Peach

continues from previous page

Cape Town, is that everything we do, where possible, is sustainable. A beautiful person who has died far too early in life.

A wonderful seat she had built in oak sits at the bottom of the garden we had at Lea End House, Hopwood. It is on a public footpath; go have a look at its simple beauty and understand its purpose.

Tim & Angelka Parsons
Cape Town, South Africa

Hannah's hope for a sustainable world: Pages 46-47

Simple beauty: The seat created by Hannah Genders in Hopwood.

Powerless

Dear Editor – I can't remember the last time I used my hot water tap.

I wash, shave and shower in cold water, or as low as I can set it. I wash up in cold water; just a bit more elbow grease is required. I do my washing at the lowest setting for the shortest time; 20c for 28mins.

You get the picture. So why am I telling you this? My bills are going up! I guess yours are, too?

I've just had a smart meter fitted by Eon. I have this sitting on the window sill in the kitchen, cheerfully telling me the rising amount I owe each day.

At midnight or thereabout, the smart meter will start a new day, and the first thing it adds is Eon's standard daily charge.

I've always tried to keep my cost of "living" to a minimum. I don't have a cooker, but I have a microwave, air fryer, fridge and washing machine. All of which were chosen for energy efficiency first.

These are all-electric, so I use them to a minimum, and I can't use them any less.

Gas is basically for the boiler, which provides the hot water which I don't use and heating. The heating I try not to use. The only time is when the toilet in the bathroom has ice in it. The bathroom is the coldest room; it's a fridge in the winter!

A quick story on the side. The housing trust, BDHT, fitted an electric heater in the bathroom. BDHT did a safety check, which they always do. The surveyor that carried out the check disconnected the electric heater in the bathroom, saying that it was a dangerous and unsuitable device for the bathroom.

He didn't say anything about BDHT fitting it in the first place! Isn't that amazing?

So, back to the smart meter and Eon. Most days, the standing charge for gas and electricity is greater than the gas or electricity I use daily.

I've no idea why the standard charge is applied. It's not like the old days when people had to shuffle paper around. Today it's all computer-generated. Surely it would be best if you just paid for what you used – I mean they make a profit from that, too.

The BBC has just announced the astonishing rise in the energy cap. I'm worried, and I'm sure many are just as concerned.

What do I do now?

What do we do now?

Richard Page
Alvechurch

Deer me!

Dear Editor – I was sitting in my living room in Marlbrook when I became aware of something looking through the window and saw this deer peering in.

If the door had been open, I'm sure he would have come in the house. When he put his nose right up to the window, I could see the glass steaming up from his breath.

Pete Addison
Marlbrook

TheVillage Directory

To get your business or service noticed, call us on **0121 445 6757**

K S Installations
Kevin Smith
kainstallations@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: 0121 445 5636
Mobile: 07813 188806
- Plumbing & Heating Services
- Boiler Replacement
- Bathrooms
- Service & Repair
- Pipework Design & Installation
- Domestic, Commercial & Industrial

Worcester boiler accredited installer

HALLOWEEN OUTDOOR LASER TAG S4F

28 & 29 OCTOBER
18:30, 90 MINUTES
TAKES PLACE IN A FOREST IN HANBURY
£20 PER PERSON
£60 GROUPS OF 4
CONTACT MARK TREVERTON 01527 575141
mark@shooting4fun.co.uk | shooting4fun.co.uk

Protect your loved ones by making a Will today

Sue Jenden Associates
- Specialists in Wills, Trusts, inheritance tax planning, and administration of estates
- Affiliate member of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners
- Meetings in your own home
- Based in Lickey • Fixed fees

Tel: 0121 445 5874
info@suejendenassociates.co.uk
www.suejendenassociates.co.uk
This firm complies with the SFW Code of Conduct

I HAVE NOT RETIRED!
R. M. B. SERVICES
Domestic Appliance & Gas Engineer
as seen on Alvechurch Around & About Facebook page

BOILER BREAKDOWN SERVICE
Boiler servicing/Central heating
Boiler Replacement Service
Home owner and landlord certificates
Please book your winter service
Based in Alvechurch 07977 487 999
Find us on Facebook: 'RMB Services'

J & D MASON
– OPTICIANS –
Providing quality eyecare for over 40 years

23 The Square, Alvechurch
0121 447 8682

GET A FREE NO OBLIGATION QUOTE TODAY

SJ PAINTING & DECORATING

15 YEARS EXPERIENCE | INTERNAL TO EXTERNAL | ALL DECORATING UNDERTAKEN

07834 551921

CORNELL
Established Over 40 Years
Chimney Sweep
☑ Clean & Efficient ☑ Brush & Vacuum
Graeme Butlin
0121 445 5913 - 0754 587 6475
46 Oxford Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ER

LogCo .co
Kiln-dried firewood & bags of smokeless coal ovals. Free delivery.
Coopers Hill Farm, Alvechurch B48 7BX
0121 447 7313 logs@logco.co

Electrician
www.alimaoelectrical.co.uk
Available for small jobs, our team is fully competent, reliable and insured
• New fuse boards • Rewires • Security lights
• Extra lights • Safety checks • Extra sockets
• Garden power • Qualified • Tidy work
Quick responses and exceptional customer service
Call Matthew: 01527 306732

Windmill Hill Care
Domiciliary Care & Support Services
Consultants to the Care Industry
Independent home care agency owned and run by an experienced Registered Nurse
Traditional, bespoke, person-centred care
Safe, caring, effective, responsive and well-led
Registered with the Care Quality Commission
Contact Jackie Grant on 0121 448 3348
jackie@windmill-hill-care.co.uk
www.windmill-hill-care.co.uk

www.chrischipps.co.uk
TIMBER BESPOKE WINDOWS
For the future

Morgan plumbing and heating ltd
Lloyd Morgan
07789 622453
0121 445 6441
morganplumbingandheating.co.uk
Full PPE available for full reassurance
City & Guilds Fully Qualified Plumber

D.J.SCRIVEN ROOFING CONTRACTOR
DAVID JAMES SCRIVEN - ROOFER
TILE / SLATE / LEAD / TRADITIONAL ROOFING
NO JOB TOO SMALL - FREE QUOTATIONS
160 SIR HILTONS ROAD, BIRMINGHAM B31 3NW
TEL: 0121 291 9452 07845 268 841 07841 684 547
Email: scrivenroofing@gmail.com
Facebook: DJScriven Roofing Contractor

Checkatrade.com
10% OFF FLAT ROOFS
WEATHERGUARD Roofing Professionals
Specialists in all types of Roofing, Complete Roofs, Ridge Tiles, Lead Work, Chimneys, Fascias, Soffits, Guttering, Gutter Cleaning
Call 01527 962972 / 07795 958245
www.weatherguardservices.co.uk
info@weatherguardservices.co.uk

newtonbathrooms
PROFESSIONAL BATHROOM INSTALLATIONS
■ Plumbing
■ Plastering
■ Tiling
■ Carpentry
■ Vinyl/Laminate Fitting
■ Fully Insured
Phil Newton
t. 0800 310 2720
m. 07900 925 651
w. www.newtonbathrooms.co.uk e. sales@newtonbathrooms.co.uk

Jesson Sewell and Swadkins
Architectural Designers & Construction Consultants
Design, Planning, Building Regs
Contract Admin
Alterations and Extensions,
Refurbishment & New Build,
Residential & Commercial
The Gate House, Hewell Lane, B45
Tel: 0121 454 1144 Email: mike@jssuk.com

Breeze
• Air Source Heat Pumps
• Gas Boilers
• Servicing, repairs & installs
• Plumbing all aspects
• Landlord certifications
• Domestic & commercial
0121 758 5311
info@breezehotandcold.co.uk
www.breezehotandcold.co.uk

R.C. CARPENTRY
Doors, fitted furniture, kitchens, skirting and architrave, flooring, partitioning etc
RC.CARPENTRY
MOBILE: 07875 058788
RICHARD.RCCARPENTRY@GMAIL.COM

LICKEY CARPENTRY & CONSTRUCTION
Roofing, Floors, Kitchens, Doors, 1st & 2nd Fix
New Build, Extensions & Refurbishment
Domestic, Commercial and Schoolwork
CRB Checked & Fully Insured
Shop Fronts & Glazing
Dependable & Quality Service
Contact Paul on 07961 342304 / 0121 445 6236
e-mail:lickeycarpentry@hotmail.co.uk www.lickeycarpentry.co.uk
15 Cofton Lake Road, Birmingham B45 8PL

T.S. Electrical
Domestic & Commercial
Property/Landlord Inspections
Full & Part Rewires • Fuse Board Replacements
Alarms Fitted • PAT Testing • Part P Certified
01564 823882 / 07974 829794
Lilley Green Road, Alvechurch

A.S. PAINTING & DECORATING
For all your decorating needs
contact Alan
on 07730 477564
Cleanliness Assured • Free Quotes

KIRBCO PLUMBING & HEATING
safe
■ Central Heating Systems ■ Powerflushing
■ Gas Safety Certificates ■ Bathrooms
■ Boiler Services & Repairs ■ General Plumbing work
■ 24-hour Emergency Service
07530 818228 kirbcoplumber@gmail.com

Roberts Bespoke Joinery
FURNITURE & TRADITIONAL JOINERY

Hand-made kitchens
Free-standing and fitted furniture
Specialist joinery
Design and fitting service
The Workshop, 3 Bear Hill, Alvechurch B48 7JX
Tel: 0121 447 8017
www.robertsbespokejoinery.co.uk

Poppins Home & Office Cleaning Services
SPECIAL OFFERS ON ALL SERVICES!
Poppins offers One-Off, End-of-Tenancy and Regular Cleans, Carpet & Oven Cleaning.
We also provide Laundry, Dry Cleaning and Tailoring with a Pick-up and Drop-off service.
BASED AT THE LAUNDERETTE IN ALVECHURCH
FULLY INSURED
Mobile: 07891 899837
1b George Road, Alvechurch B48 1PB
www.poppinsservices.com
info@poppinsservices.com

Elite Sweeps
Professional Chimney Sweep
& HETAS Stove Installer
HETAS
• Prompt, reliable and friendly service
• Cowls and Chimney Pots fitted
• Fully qualified and fully insured
• Guild certificates issued after every sweep
Call Eddie: 01527 962555 / 07712 220671
www.elitesweeps.co.uk

We Are Now Fully Open
ACS INTERIOR DOORS
Beautiful Interior Doors Supplied and Installed

Please visit our new showroom in Studley.
Unit 1
Ground Floor
Haydon House
Alcester Road
Studley
B80 7AN
07592 303104 or
07910 289565
www.acsinteriordoors.co.uk

ClassicCarpentry
Friendly Service, Free Estimates, Quality Work

All Internal & External Carpentry Insurance Work Undertaken
Dave Terry
0121 445 1574 or 07970 966470
www.classic-carpentry.co.uk
classiccarpentry@hotmail.co.uk

CTB ALARMS LTD
YOUR LOCAL ALARM COMPANY
• Alarm Installations • Alarm repairs
• Alarm system servicing
• Upgrade/Modernisation of alarms
24/7 response • 25+ years experience
t: 0121 445 2865
e: sales@ctbalarms.co.uk w: www.ctbalarms.co.uk

On track computers Ltd
computer engineers · you can trust
Which? Trusted Trader
Mike Nash - Qualified - Local - Friendly
Mobile Computer Engineer
– will visit your Home or Office
■ Virus & Spyware Removal ■ Wireless Broadband Set Up/Repair ■ All Computer Hardware Repair ■ Laptop Screen Replacement
Tel: 0121 445 2065
Email: helpme@ontrackcomputers.co.uk
www.ontrackcomputers.co.uk
Serving Barnt Green & surrounding areas for over 15 years

Pledger Electrical Services
TRUST MARK
LOCAL ELECTRICIAN
NAPIT
Part P Registered Installer
● Installations ● Maintenance & Repair
● Inspection & Testings ● Reliable Service
Call Dean: 0121 445 1601 or 07891 498909

NATURE BOUNCES BACK

BACK in July, a ferocious fire blazed through more than three acres of woodland on Rednal Hill, leaving a path of destruction, *writes Keith Woolford*.

The fire is believed to have been started by a disposable BBQ which combined with the extraordinary weather and drought the UK experienced this summer to burn out of control.

The Lickey Hills Country Park was badly affected by the fire and a large area of heathland was badly damaged. When a call for assistance was put out by the Lickey Hills Park Rangers, more than 40 people volunteered to help clear-up the damage.

The volunteers, including a number of Lickey Hills Society members, met the park rangers on Rednal Hill in September. Their main tasks for the day included picking up litter, especially broken glass which could lead to future fires, and clearing ferns and bracken which were already growing quickly and casting shade over new bilberry growth.

The fire, although devastating appears to have cleared the way for some bilberry to regenerate and grow back.

Bilberry is rare in the area of the Lickey Hills so to encourage growth, the fast-growing bracken had to be cleared in order to let the bilberry beneath thrive.

Ranger Penny Marriott was extremely pleased with the turnout of volunteers and said of the day: "Apart from the broken glass which was painstakingly removed, we found an intact scent bottle, an old Mitchell & Butlers spirit bottle, and a collection of marbles.

"The bilberry has been given a helping hand with the removal of other growth.

Above: The clear-up team cheer a job well done after a day's clear-up.
Below: Volunteers clear bracken and pick up litter to help regrowth.
Pictures/*Keith Woolford*

"We will be monitoring this area carefully and will be reseeding Rednal Hill with heather collected from other parks in our area soon, Penny added.

Since the fire, the Park Rangers have reiterated to visitors to the Lickey Hills that fires and BBQs are not permitted, and encouraged to bring picnics instead, remembering to take home litter.

■ **There will be further opportunities to help with the clear up efforts. You can join the Rangers on Saturday 29 October at Rednal Hill. The what3words location to meet is: pipes.cases.press**

Pictures and words by **KEITH WOOLFORD**

BLACKWELL ROCKS

FOLLOWING an event like Blackwell Music Festival of 2021 was never going to be an easy feat but Blackwell rocked bigger than ever this year with the live music, entertainment and food drawing in big crowds to the day.

With more than 700 visitors, the 2022 festival was a smash hit, thanks to the efforts of Emma Westwood and her enthusiastic team of volunteers who organised seven live music acts to entertain festival-goers throughout the day and into the evening.

The festival received sponsorship from a number of local businesses which made the day possible.

The stage this year was bigger than previous years, as was the undercover area, providing a splendid space for the acts to perform from, and an area for visitors to dance. The beer tent was also kept busy throughout the day, and there were food vendors for those who didn't bring a picnic with them.

Providing entertainment for all of the family, in addition to live music, large inflatables kept little ones (and some bigger ones!) happy – and there was even boxing to wear the family out.

The passing of Queen Elizabeth II was marked by the Rev Sheri Gidney and Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council chairman Bakul Kumar, followed by a rendition of *God Save the King* from the crowd, which was probably a first for all.

Ten-year-old Freddie Williams was the winner of the raffle and is now the proud owner of an adult's mountain bike, donated by Halfords – but he'll he'll have to wait a few years to grow into it! The raffle raised £423 which will go towards Blackwell Community Hall and next year's music festival.

Villagers and friends danced well into the evening, with The Works closing the event and getting everyone on their feet under the fairy lights and impressive Harvest Moon.

Clockwise from top left: All smiles in the beer tent, Emma Westwood and the team of festival organisers, Dancing to The GTs, A group of happy villagers party into the night, The 3 Goats (2 pictured), Excitement during the 3 goats, Shake your tail feathers - or scales!

Clockwise from above: The festival attracts a large crowd under the marquee, Children packing a punch, SportyBakes looking jolly, The Shore pose with their instruments, The Works on stage, Forro Tempo with fans, Midnight City Soul Band chill at front of stage, The GTs please the crowd, Dan Sealy belts it out, Taking air guitar literally, The festival team greet festival goers.

THE FOOTSTEPS AT FORGE MILL

You might have been to Forge Mill just outside Bordesley. . . local historian and author, Anne Bradford, whose stories we've featured previously, published the following tale from two women working in the Needle Museum in her book ***Worcestershire, the haunted county***. We've included an abridged version . . .

On the edge of Bordesley Abbey Meadows, down Needle Mill Lane are two adjacent museums. The first is the Visitor's Centre, which deals with the history of Bordesley Abbey. Next to it is the seventeenth century Forge Mill, probably the only water-powered needle scouring mill still in existence, it was still working in 1958 before falling into ruin. However it was rescued and restored by a team of dedicated volunteers. It was saved by the Redditch Development Corporation and opened as a museum by Queen Elizabeth II in 1983. The whole history of needle-making is preserved here.

Many visitors and volunteers alike have reported a feeling of unease, with some children from school groups recoiling in fear when they reach the scouring mill floor.

A Ghost Club once held a paranormal investigation one night and managed to record a noise that sounded as if it could have been women's and children's voices.

Rachael, the Education Officer has been involved with the mill since 2004. She recalled "You do hear creaks and noises because the whole place is really old and creepy but you get used to the noises so you know which noises are normal and which ones are not.

I was working late one afternoon in the office, everyone else had gone home. The place was all locked up, even the outer door of the office, no one could get in. Without any doubt I heard footsteps walk through the gallery and come toward the locked office door. I waited, trembling in fear for whatever-it-was to come through the door but nothing happened. But that's not the first time I've heard someone walking about when the place was closed. There are always women's footsteps, on days when the museum is closed and no one is around and when I've been to look and see who it is, no one is there."

The Keeper of Collections, Jo-Ann is the official key holder, so is called out in emergencies such as an alarm call. She tells of how she received an alarm call at 4am early one morning; "It came from the scouring mill. My husband Richard came with me. When we have a call-out we follow a certain routine, first we put the lights on, then we lock the doors behind us. We walked into the scouring mill and stood on the mill floor.

We looked at each other in surprise as we heard two female voices upstairs. Richard ran all the way upstairs shouting "You shouldn't be here, the mill is closed". When he got upstairs he was astonished to find no one was there. It was only when he came downstairs we remembered we had locked the doors behind us. We both heard those voices …

Forge Mill and the water, housing plenty of secrets. ***Photo: Paul Wilde***

There's an old story that one of the workers had an affair with the man who owned the mill. Eventually he grew bored with her and rejected her. She was distraught at the realisation that she meant nothing to him and threw herself from a window into the pond at the back of the mill, where she drowned.

Her body was swept into the mill wheel where it jammed the wheel. Her body was torn to pieces.

The workers never recovered all of her body and that's why she comes back, looking for the missing parts of her body.

The following stories were sent to TheVillage by readers detailing their encounters with the supernatural . . . we'll leave you to decide if you believe them. If you have a spooky or ghostly story to tell, we'd love to hear it! You can email it to us at: editor@villageonline.co.uk.

MY NIGHT-TIME GUESTS

Artist's impression of the spectre.

I WAS about nine or ten, and had a fairly normal evening at home on the Oakalls. I had probably stayed up later than I should have and had finally fallen asleep.

But something caused me to wake from a dead sleep. I immediately sensed a presence in the room and I knew it wasn't any of my family, in the way that you can sense the presence of someone you know. After a few seconds, I peeked at the bottom of the bed. There was a figure stood at the foot of my bed, watching me sleep. This is where it gets weird . . .

the figure was wearing distinctive glasses and had red hair . . . It was Chris Evans.

He didn't do anything, just continued to stand there for a few more moments, and then disappeared.

I'm now in my thirties and I know he is still alive today. So I can't explain why he was at the foot of my bed that night. Only Chris can confirm whether he is a time traveller or a wizard capable of astral projection. Perhaps it wasn't *actually* Chris Evans, but another celestial figure who, to a child, looked like the presenter because of the red hair and glasses.

That wasn't the last time I was visited by someone who shouldn't have been in my bedroom.

Years later I was living in Barnt Green. I was in bed one night with my wife, and in the early hours, I rolled over towards the wall, and there was a dark shadowy figure crouched by my face. I lay there frozen for a few moments before it vanished. This one was an elderly woman in her eighties. She was wearing a dark dress and an apron, similar to the clothes of a Victorian servant. If anyone knows if the CALA homes development or the surrounding area has been linked to any other similar experiences, I would be very interested.

I know that people won't believe that I saw a paranormal Chris Evans, but I know what I saw . . .

My wife doesn't believe me either, but she says she hopes Chris Evans comes to visit her one night sometime. Although I think she's talking about the "other" Chris Evans, the one from Captain America . . .

Name Supplied
Now living in Alvechurch

THE SEPIA MAN

WHEN I was a child in the 90s, all of the kids on my road in Alvechurch used to play in the gardens into the evening, shouting to each other over the fences and hedges. One summer evening, when I was about seven, I remember it was really warm and it felt like a Sunday night because I had that "Sunday night feeling" in my tummy.

We'd all been playing in our gardens and I was one of the last ones out. The sun was setting and everything was getting gloomy. My mom had been calling me in for bed for a while and finally I headed towards the back door. As I got to our porch, a man appeared at the end of the alley at the side of the house, where the drive led to the back garden. . . although there was a locked gate in between. I remember stopping and staring at him as I didn't recognise him as one of our neighbours or a friend of my parents.

He was dressed in a wide brimmed, formal hat and a long brown trench-coat. He didn't say anything but after a couple of seconds he started moving - almost gliding towards me. I ran towards the house as fast as I could and it was only as I passed him that I noticed he looked like an old photograph, not normal 'human' coloured, he looked like he was sepia. I ran into the house and locked myself in our downstairs loo because I was sure he was going to follow me inside the house.

After a few minutes, and silence, I looked out of our living room window into the garden, but he had gone. I never said anything to my parents as if I'd come in when Mom had started calling me I wouldn't have seen anything. Even now, all this time later I still wonder if I really did see something supernatural, or maybe there was a strange man who somehow made his way into our garden. . . I can't decide which is more creepy!

Name withheld
Once lived in Alvechurch

ppm financial planning
ppmfinancialplanning.com

How much money do you need to be financially free?

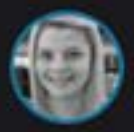
Let PPM Financial Planning help you to understand your number.

ppm financial planning

PPM Financial Planning
Lifestyle & Financial Planning | Financial Advice
Pensions | Investments | Tax | Protection
Head Office: The Needle Factory, British Mills, Albert Street, Redditch B97 4DA
Tel: 0121 445 5694 **Email:** enquiries@ppmfinancialplanning.com
Web: www.ppmfinancialplanning.com
Registered as a Limited Company in England and Wales No. 05839628
PPM Financial Planning is a trading style of Pryor Portfolio Management Limited who are regulated by the FCA 511176

Meet the team

Martin Pryor
Financial Planner & Adviser
Business & Finance degree to Graduate training course at Prudential, leading to becoming a qualified independent financial adviser and setting up PPM Financial Planning in 2006.



Laura Daniels
Mortgage Adviser
Laura joined in 2016, providing admin support whilst completing training to become our qualified mortgage broker.

Nicky Lowndes
General Manager
Nicky Joined PPM Financial Planning at the very beginning in 2006 bringing with her 19 years of banking experience with HSBC.

Laura Siddall
Financial Adviser
Laura has 19 years of industry experience. Laura's role is to construct financial plans for clients using our cash flow modelling software, helping deliver true financial planning.

Louise Wheeler
Paraplanner
Louise Joined PPM in September 2021, bringing with her 8 years of paraplanning experience and 13 years working within financial services.

STUDENTS' FIRST STEPS

Martin Pryor gives financial advice for those starting university life.

Students the length and breadth of the country are probably just about recovered from freshers week and, hangover aside, they start their university journey without a care in the world. For many, this is the first time they have left home to fend for themselves. It is also the first time that many will have to manage their money and plan their expenditure.

It's easy to let your finances get away from you when you are a student, and for many people university is the first place to learn lessons on money management that set the tone for years to come. Having been through the university system myself, I believe it is just as much about gaining valuable life skills as it is achieving academic success.

Taking the 5 step system used in Warren Shute's *The Money Plan*, we can apply these principles to help students just as much as they can help their more financially savvy parents!

Step 1 – Goals: What grade do you want to achieve? What experiences do you want to have along the way? How will you fund your student life and can you earn while also learning skills that will help you to achieve your long-term career goals? An example here could be someone wanting a career in sports journalism could do some freelance reporting for the local newspapers.

Break up your goals into small achievable chunks, planning from term to term is perfect. At the end of the term assess how you are doing against your goals and reset if needs be for the next term.

If you don't know where you are going, how will you ever achieve what it is you want?

Step 2 – Get organized: Set up two bank accounts: One for bills and another for personal spending (I like to call it your wild living allowance (WLA). Monzo is great for this (but there are others!). Arrange for all of your regular payments, standing orders and direct debits to come out of your bills account. You should regularly question these direct debits with the following scrutiny: Do I need this? Do I want this? Can it get this cheaper?

This will keep your bills under control, which will allow you to transfer more money to your . . . **Wild Living Allowance** account. This is your fun, beer, crazy account. Remember to divide this by four so that you avoid only having one good week every month! Even better, only transfer to your WLA once a week. Research suggests that Wednesday is a good day to make this weekly transfer.

Don't forget to allow for large one-offs or these can bite you on the bum. Don't dip into your bills account once your weekly budget has run out.

Debt is almost inevitable but make sure that when you receive your lump sum you don't treat it like a windfall and blow it too soon.

Email me if you would like to see an example cashflow spreadsheet that you can adapt with your own numbers.

Step 3 – Financial Foundations: Suggesting a student has an emergency fund may sound fanciful but if you can manage it you will reduce/erase all financial stress. It doesn't have to be much but enough to get you quickly out of a hole or situation. In later life I call it a client's *sleep at night money.*

Make a Will and also lasting power of attorney: These are not just for the old. We can lose our mental capacity through an accident at any time.

Step 4 – Paying down debt: The time will come post-university to start paying down your debt but you may also have peaks and troughs throughout university of small debts which you may be able to pay off as you go along. If you do, then for the time being don't target the debts with the highest interest, but instead target the smallest debts. Why? I hear you ask. Because paying off a debt will give you a dopamine boost and you will feel motivated to want to do it again. This is called the snowball system as you will get into the habit of paying off debts to get that rush and feeling of freedom. Of course, make sure your biggest debts are on the lowest interest rate possible and pay the minimum payments.

Step 5 – Investing: If having an emergency fund sounded fanciful, then this one will sound completely detached from reality but you may receive an inheritance, you may find a job you like that fits into your schedule enabling you to earn more than you need. You may even be entrepreneurial, and your idea takes off.

The purpose of the step though is to advise caution and not to get caught up in get-rich-quick ideas. Remember the saying: *If it is too good to be true it probably is.* Even investing in the stock market should be considered a five or even seven-year commitment to ensure you ride out its peaks and troughs. Instead, invest in savings accounts, NS&I or premium bonds until after you have finished university and have time to consider your financial position. Once your situation is clearer, than I would be more than happy to sit down and discuss the magic of *Compounding!*

Martin Pryor
Lifestyle Financial Planner
For more information, please contact us
Tel: 07961 162818
martinpryor@ppmfinancialplanning.com
www.ppmfinancialplanning.com

The Value of your investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. You should seek independent financial advice if you are unsure of the right decision for your circumstances.

Working with mortgage and home-sale experts

Village Financial Solutions joins forces with Michelle & Co Sales & Lettings.

Mark Meads (above) with the Michelle & Co team and (right) ready to provide expert advice.

Village Financial continues to work in partnership with Michelle & Co helping home movers from their Barnt Green office.

It is now more important than ever that you get the right advice when selling your home and Michelle and Shaya Mehjoo, the directors of Michelle & Co, ensure that personal service comes first, guaranteeing a friendly and professional service from start to finish.

Please call Michelle and Co on 0121 274 0568 and take advantage of their years of experience to appraise your property and discuss how they can maximise your chances of selling your home in a timely and efficient manner.

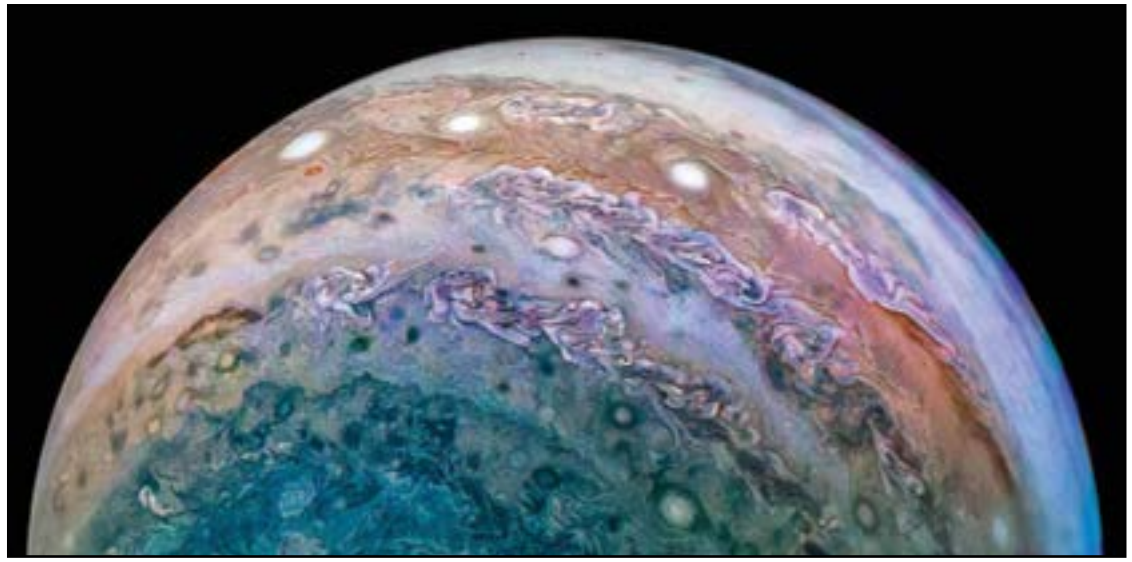
Mark and the team at Village Financial will continue to offer support for all your mortgage and protection needs, whether that be for first-time buyers, home movers or just looking for a new mortgage deal. They will also continue to offer advice for equity release and buy to let mortgage needs.

If you are concerned about interest rates and are looking to re-finance, they are now able to reserve a rate up to six months in advance of your current mortgage rate expiring. In the current climate where we are seeing interest rates rise, it is important to act early.

Please feel free to make an appointment by calling 0121 445 1227 or by emailing: info@villagefinancial.co.uk

This firm usually charges a fee for mortgage advice. The amount of the fee will depend upon your needs and circumstances. This will be discussed and agreed with you at the earliest opportunity. Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up payments on your mortgage. An Equity Release product will reduce the value of your estate, will not be suitable for everyone and may affect your entitlement to state benefits. To understand the features and risks please ask for a personalised illustration. Village Financial Solutions Ltd is an appointed representative of PRIMIS Mortgage Network. PRIMIS Mortgage Network is a trading style of Personal Touch Financial Services Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

DARK NIGHTS BRING JOY



Above: The south pole of Jupiter. Below: a partial eclipse similar to one expected this month.

Amateur astronomer **Brian Watkiss** peers into the *Village* night sky.

I WAS expecting to start these notes with an explanation of what *Artemis* is and where it is in the sky on its way to the Moon but a simple hydrogen leak has put paid to that and I would be the last to complain about leaky pipework. So instead let's answer that burning question, "What's that bright star I can see just after sunset?".

Well, of course, it's not a star but the mightiest planet in our Solar System, Jupiter. Big enough to contain all the matter in the rest of the planets, it shines the brightest because its massive disc reflects so much light and is challenged only by Venus. To the ancient Greeks, it was seen as the king of the gods, Zeus and the same was true of the Romans who named it Jupiter. To us, it was Jove which gives us the word jovial as astrologers believed it brings happiness. The music composer Holst, in writing his *The Planets* suite sees Jupiter as the round faced, cheery uncle of the planets (which reminds me of someone) and the bringer of jollity. Manfred Mann's Earth Band took this music and turned it into a song called "Joybringer". So this giant ball of mostly hydrogen has impressed many people over the years and the probe Juno is orbiting it right now, sending lots of data and wonderful pictures.

At the moment, Jupiter is sitting in the south east, between the constellations of Aquarius and Pisces, neither of which is very distinct in our light polluted skies. More obvious is the great square of Pegasus, just above. Look to see how many stars you can see in this square to gauge the level of this pollution. Of course, you will need to be out in the darkness for half an hour or so, to let your eyes adjust.

Over to the right, in the south, there is the Summer Triangle of Vega, Deneb and Altair. Below is the second largest planet, Saturn. Completely outshone by Jupiter, it looks like little more than a bright star. To add insult,

Holst saw Saturn as the bringer of old age. Poor Saturn. Thanks to its rings however, it is the most spectacular sight ever through a telescope. Beat that Jupiter.

Away from the evening sky, we have a partial eclipse of the Sun this month. At 10.07am on the 25th, the Moon will chomp away at the top left corner of the Sun, reaching maximum at 10.56 – and 45 minutes later, it will be over. Remember never to look directly at the Sun and use solar glasses made for the job. Telescope owners can use theirs to project an image but don't forget to cap the finderscope.

Anyway, whatever you do this October, have a very jolly month.

Village Gardening: A Tribute

HANNAH'S HOPE FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

It is with sadness and pride that I write this tribute following the death of Hannah Genders after a long and difficult illness, which she bore with determination, style and grace to the end – **Mike Genders.**

Hannah started writing gardening articles for *The Village* in 2003 continuing right up until her piece for the July/August 2022 edition. She loved this opportunity to share her passion for all things Eco, Green & Growing and she also had a sound business head as I know that many *Village* readers became clients, having their gardens designed and plants supplied by her.

As "*The Village* magazine reporter" she found great joy every year when an RHS Chelsea press pass dropped through our letterbox. This led to much dancing around our kitchen followed by a few days staying with her friend Kaaren in Islington and the privilege of access to Press Day at Chelsea along with the great and good.

Hannah achieved much in her work life as a gardener and garden designer. RHS medals of every hue for show gardens at Chelsea and Malvern, stints as a TV presenter, appearances on national radio and speaking at shows and festivals to share her passion for gardens and to champion others involved in her vision for sustainable horticulture.

Hannah carried a great sadness about the damage we have done to our planet. For her, gardening was an expression of hope for improving our world. This led her increasingly to champion sustainable gardening practices and to head up a section at The Malvern Spring Show called the EGG, "Eco, Green & Growing".

She curated this gathering of like-minded groups and individuals to promote sustainable gardening and living, to share discussion and debate about growing food and using gardens to heal, restore and build hope for a better future. She involved community groups, artists, musicians and creatives to build a festival of hope and joy amidst the tired retail shopping experience that so many of these garden shows seem to have become.

Above: Hannah's garden design at St Michael's Hospice, Hereford.

Below: Hannah at work on-stage with garden designer Chris Beardshaw at her EGG section of RHS Malvern Spring show in 2019.

Hannah was a great gardener and improver of people too. Her skill in putting different plants together was matched by a knack for finding creative, industrious gardeners, crafts people, artists and builders to collaborate on projects. She mentored landscape contractors and will be remembered for her honest and diligent dealings with those she worked for and with.

This morning I leant against beautiful cleft chestnut palings in a friend's garden to drink my first tea of the day. These were supplied by Toby and Aly from Say it with Wood. This lovely sustainable fencing features in many of Hannah's gardens. At home writing this I am looking out at wonderful paving laid by Dan and Matt Ryan who Hannah loved working with.

She also worked closely for 15 years with the German Company Baufritz, who design and build beautiful passive houses. Hannah designed the garden spaces for many of their UK clients. I know that some of you who read this will be sitting looking at Hannah's garden around your Baufritz home.

I have just received some recent photos of Hannah's garden at St Michael's Hospice in Hereford. This was built for the Malvern Spring Show in 2015 and rebuilt at the hospice.

Hannah collaborated with sculptor Matt Sanderson, whose stunning angel tree canopy sits in the centre of her planting. Considering the heat of this summer, I think you can see from the picture on the opposite page her skill at providing colour, texture and durability in the face of drought using well chosen plants, in well cared for mulched beds.

I am now faced with her often overwhelming absence after spending my entire adult life so far with her at the centre of all I that have done. I thank Richard and his *Village* magazine team over the years for their work with Hannah. Her articles have been enjoyed by many and are treasured by me as one of my reminders of her and who she was.

Hannah Genders: 28 December 1963 - 15 August 2022.

In Hannah's memory, please: keep gardening, grow as much food as you can, make compost, mulch, look after the soil, collect rain water, collect seeds, leave areas in your gardens a bit untidy to help encourage wildlife, feed the birds, minimise hard surfaces in your gardens, stop using peat, no plastic grass, avoid plastic pots, recycle, spend time in reflection, enjoying peace and quiet in your garden and in your friends' gardens, spend other times filling your gardens with friends, family, food, drinks, music, dancing, love and hope.

Can I use this opportunity to also thank my neighbours and friends in Withybed Green and Alvechurch for their kindness and support. I have been scooped up and taken for a pint, fed cakes and delicious homemade soup, hugged, and wept with. The countless cards and letters sharing the sadness at Hannah's leaving have been overwhelming and for them I say thank you.

Mike Genders

Blooming impressive turnout

Above: Ryan McShane with his first prize entry for best painted self-portrait.

AFTER a two year hiatus, the Rowney Green Horticultural Society recommenced their Flowers and Produce Show in the Rowney Green Peace Hall early in September.

BBC TV personality Joanne Malin, who is a long-time friend of the society, presented trophies to the winners in a long list of catergories, including fruit, vegetables and wine along with craft categories, a wide-ranging flower section, photographic and domestic categories.

Entries weren't as plentiful as in previous years, due to the extreme weather conditions in the UK over summer and in the weeks preceding the show, however the standard of entries was excellent and there were many tough choices to be made for the judges.

Once the judging was completed, visitors were able to browse the entries and gather inspiration for future shows and explore their talented neighbours crafts and produce.

Ryan McShane won first prize in the under-16 Paint a Self Portrait category and generously donated his prize money to charity.

Local Bobby PC Head popped in to keep order in the fuchsia section and had to caution one gentleman for wearing an outrageous shirt! But at least the shirt was in keeping with the floral theme (pictured, below right).

Society Chair Pat Davies was very pleased with the show, on the closing of the event and was delighted that Joanne was able to accept their invitation to attend and present the awards.

Above: Joanne Malin with some of the winners.
Below: The RGHS Committee gather on the steps of the hall.
Bottom: Outstanding entries to the show & an outrageous shirt.

More pictures overleaf

Garden Landscaping & Maintenance:
Driveways, Patios & Decking
Lawn Mowing
Fencing & Gates
Hedge Cutting
Garden Clearance
Hopwood Garden Services
0121 445 1253
or
0751 7367663
www.hopwoodgardenservices.co.uk
info@hopwoodgardenservices.co.uk

Make the Most of Your Garden
LINDSAY STANTON
Garden Design
Creative designs for all types of garden approached with a flair for planting and sensitivity to owners' requirements.
Over 20 Years Experience
T: 0121 445 2364
E: lindsaystanton@btinternet.com

Lawnwise
Professional Lawn Care
SERVICES
Lawn Fertilising - Moss & Weed Control - Scarification
Aeration - Top Dressing - Lawn Overseeding
Pest & Disease Control - Lawn Renovations
ALVECHURCH BASED, FULLY INSURED & NPTC QUALIFIED
Book your FREE no obligation LAWN SURVEY today!
BOOK NOW
07773 563231 contact@lawnwise.uk www.lawnwise.uk

treefix
Tree Surgeon Specialists
Treefix are fully qualified arborists (Tree Surgeons) who provide a wide range of professional services to meet all your Domestic and Commercial tree surgery needs.
SERVICES INCLUDE:
Felling
Dismantling
Crown Reduction
Crown Lifting
Crown Thinning
Dead Wooding/Crown Clean
Stump Grinding
Hedge Care
Pollarding
FREE QUOTATION
NO OBLIGATION
JOIN US ON:
Call now
07810 838 221
OR 01527 757915
Email: info@treefix.co.uk
Web: www.treefix.co.uk
(Please ask to see proof of insurance, we are happy to show you our certificates)
City & Guilds NPTC Qualified
Fully insured to climb to ANY height. 5 Million Public Liability Conform to the BS 3998

continues from previous page

Pictured: winners, blooms and lots of fun being had at the Rowney Green Horticultural Society show.

Reeves Tree Surgeons
PROFESSIONAL & AFFORDABLE

- All tree and hedge work undertaken
- We will leave your garden to your satisfaction
- Fully qualified & insured for your peace of mind
- Local authority approved contractors
- We care because we want your repeat custom

01527 874143
Email: info@reevestreesurgeons.co.uk
www.reevestreesurgeons.co.uk

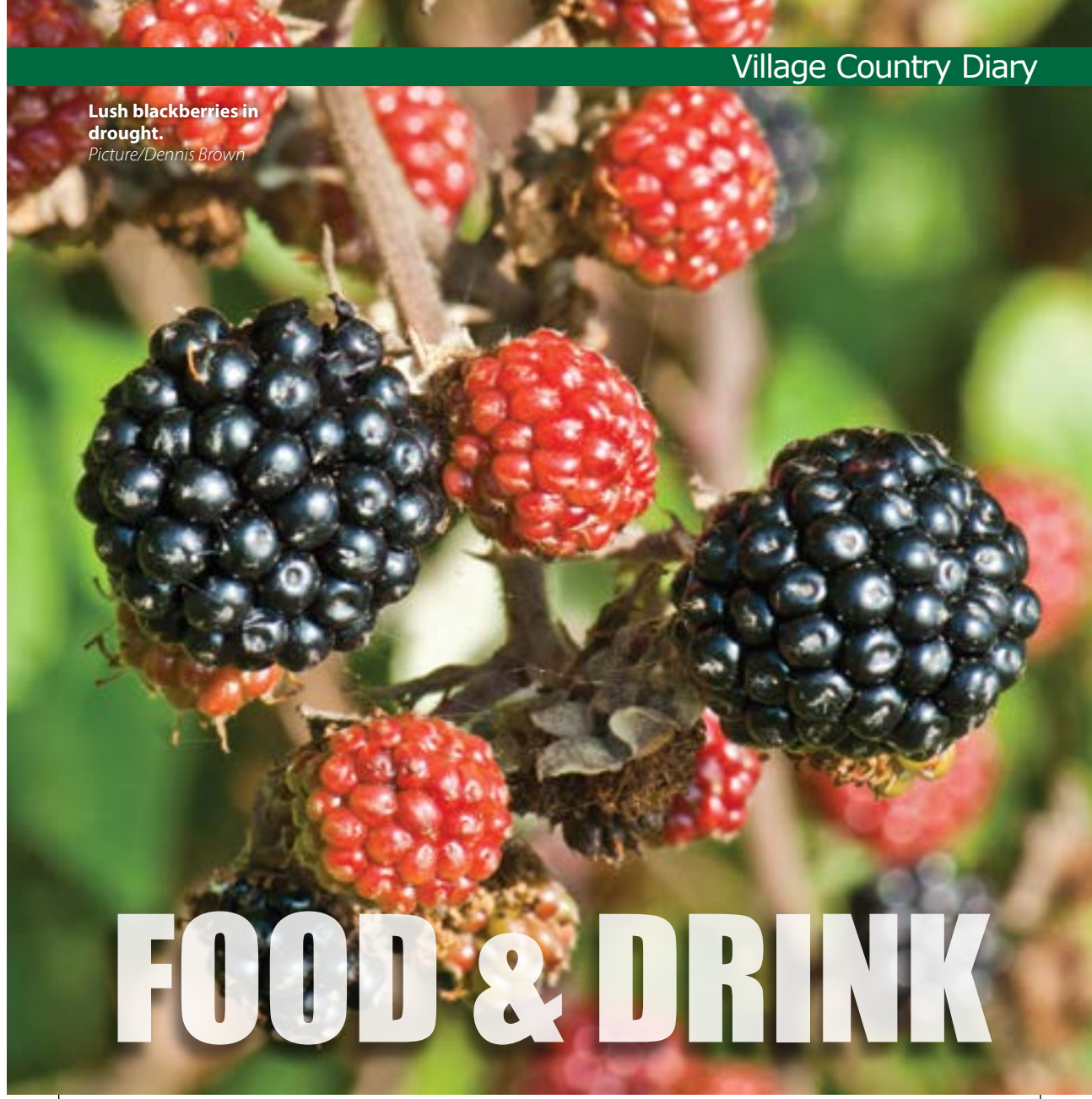
ALVECHURCH
TREE CARE & LANDSCAPING LTD
NPTC qualified tree surgeon
Fully insured

ALL ASPECTS OF TREE SURGERY UNDERTAKEN
- Stump grinding
- Hedge cutting
- Landscaping
- Grass cutting

For a free no-obligation quotation call Oli: 07391 551413 or Neil: 07834 554710 Email neil@alvechurch-treecare.co.uk

Hopwood TREE SERVICES
Devon Finney
Tree Surgeon
NPTC Qualified
Fully Insured

Specialist in all aspects of tree work:
Felling, removal, topping, thinning, reductions, pollards, lifts, cut backs, tree inspections • **STUMP GRINDING**
24-hour emergency service
For a free estimate and advice, call **07800 532690**
hopwoodtreeservices@hotmail.com



Lush blackberries in drought.
Picture/Dennis Brown

FOOD & DRINK

I want to start by saying rest in peace to my fellow columnist and neighbour Hannah Genders. The story of horticulture has moved in recent years from one often about trying to control and alter nature to one about working with nature. Hannah was very influential in this movement.

IT'S a good year for acorns after last year's rest year. They set well, staying rather small during the drought on some oaks, but eventually swelled and made this a "mast year". There are two native oaks – English Oak and Sessile Oak. Most round here are English – they have acorns on long stems. Sessile oaks have acorns close to the branch. All have a good mast

Mary Green examines our local waterways and how we can make improvements to avoid future flooding.

year this year: they communicate underground with each other to do this.

It's been good for other nuts and seeds, from field-maples to conkers. Fruit too – my apple tree has never

continues overleaf

continues from previous page

been so laden; damsons, sloes and most other plums are bowed down to the ground. Some of the early flowering fruits like cherry plums didn't do so well because of frosts or lack of pollinators at blossom time. Wild cherries weren't great, but the cultivated English crop was wonderful in the sunny June and July. Berries are profuse on hawthorn and holly. It should be a good feed for our birds and mammals. The fruit came early so they will feed up and store food for the winter.

Water has been very much on my mind lately, especially the lack of it. This spring and summer have been exceptionally dry in our area. In other countries drought has been disastrous. Floods, too, have hit some countries and may come to us – both extremes becoming more common because of climate change.

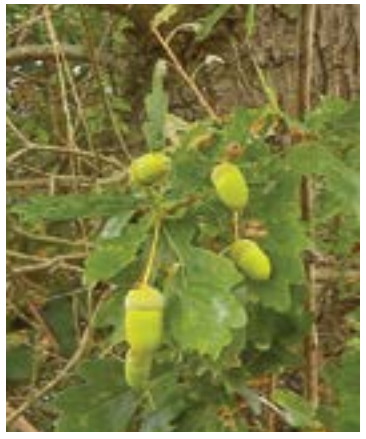
Most native wildlife here will have coped with the drought. Deep-rooted perennial plants can find water under the ground. This was very clear to me when I was eating luscious blackberries in August. Those deep-rooted brambles that we hate in our gardens can produce plump fruits even in a drought.

Trees may start to withdraw nutrients from their leaves earlier than usual, so the leaves turn colour and we get an earlier "autumn," but they will survive. Most wild flowers ran quickly to flower and seed, and the plants started dying down earlier, but this will not harm them.

Only where we have intervened, on built-up, mown grass and some agricultural areas, and with non-native plants, has the drought been destructive. And even mown lawns have green patches where the native perennial wildflowers are still there. The front lawns in Alvechurch carrying old meadow plants broke out into flowers of bedstraw and yarrow in September!

We seemed to have a shortage of insects this year, perhaps partly due to the dry spring, but around water there were more. We are lucky here to have water in the canal and our local reservoirs, as otherwise the streams in our

Above, left: Laden pear tree. **Above, right:** Plentiful rowan berries.
Below: Hay meadows, good for cultivation, and Pendunculate acorns.



dingles would not be enough to keep our insects going in a dry summer. And if we don't have them, we don't have the birds and mammals either.

I have recently been looking at what Barnt Green Waters are doing to use their waters fully as resources for wildlife and the wider biodiversity of our area. They are seeing a restoration of aquatic plants and invertebrate life in their waters and are restoring habitat around the ponds and lakes to host more insects and birds. I'll write more about this in a later article, but it looks very encouraging.

And I've been talking to the Canal and Rivers Trust about restoring the biodiversity of a stretch of canal-side in Alvechurch which has been damaged in the past. Water is so important to keep our wildlife corridors going.

It's not just the lack of water that's been in the news, but the poor quality of it. Water companies have been discharging horrifying amounts of raw sewage into the sea and sometimes into rivers. Our own Severn Trent was fined for discharges in Worcestershire. Nationally our waters are some of the most polluted in Europe. Water quality in our River Arrow is poor, and it is a continual struggle to improve

Above: Pasture-fed cattle help the environment. **Below:** Bullace, a type of wild plum, growing by water.

the water quality in the Bittell waters. Apart from deliberate discharges, some of our local pollution is from sources like septic tanks, or industrial waste, but most of it is agricultural in origin. Modern farming techniques mean chemicals from fertilisers run off and eventually damage our waters and their wildlife. That's why we can't separate our water issues from our food issues.

There has already been some flooding after drought, which sounds odd but damage from too much water and too little water are caused by similar bad human management of the land. For example, areas covered with deep-rooted perennial plants and trees can absorb water in wet weather and hold it in drought. However, land that is ploughed dries out in drought and floods in heavy rain.

Some farms are trying different cultivation methods to grow vegetables. Strip-tilling involves shallow cultivated strips planted with vegetables, with the intermediate strips being uncultivated. This helps manage the water and means there is no need for artificial irrigation. Similarly, perennial hay meadows which feed cattle, and sheep-pastures where the animals are moved on regularly, will capture carbon and soak up water, providing a sustainable source of food. It's only if animals are fed on grain and soya from ploughed fields that meat becomes environmentally non-sustainable. There is an extra positive: land managed this way will be far more biodiverse in plant species and therefore in insect, bird and mammal species too.

Some of our practices with water have made things worse or only moved a problem elsewhere. For example, rivers were often straightened to make them better for transport or water supplies, or to allow building. Their banks were reinforced to prevent flooding. All this did was move the flood elsewhere.

A natural river will be curvy, and each bend helps control the flow of water, slowing it down so it can be absorbed. The shape will keep changing – remember those ox-bow lakes from your Geography lessons! Wild plants in rivers also help – they are not "weeds" though there is a problem when non-native plants like floating pennywort come into them. Dredging rivers to deepen them does not help long-term – it may improve the flow but again only moves any potential flood down-stream. (Artificial waterways like canals may need dredging.)

What does help is settling ponds that both slow down the flow of water and conserve it when dry. My local

continues overleaf

Taking a lead: Environmental work on Bittell waters.

continues from previous page

farm has these up its dingle streams. They were quite old, fallen into disrepair, but have been re-established. And I've seen several examples of rivers and streams being re-curved. Animals like beavers help to regulate the flow too.

At one time, low-lying meadows were recognised as water meadows and usually flooded in winter. This was part of the cycle of farming and managed the water from winter rains. Many of these areas have now been drained and some built on, so they no longer serve their purpose. Drainage of land has caused a lot of issues: whenever it's done, the water has to go somewhere else. I visited the North Yorkshire Moors recently, and find it hard to believe that they are still draining peatlands (for grouse shooting) thus simultaneously causing flooding elsewhere, damaging one of our most biodiverse habitats, and reducing its ability to act as a carbon sink.

Even arable fields, generally bad for water retention, were more useful in the days when stubble was left over the winter, so the roots in the soil helped absorb rain. Similarly the old practice of under-sowing a grain crop with a different plant crop like legumes or clover not only helped wildlife but allowed water retention too. These techniques are being revisited now.

I come back often in these articles to farming, because it is our main land use. It's the cause of a lot of our problems but is also a potential source of solving them. For example, large scale farming of meat and poultry uses valuable water and grain that could have been for humans, pollutes the environment with chemicals, destroys biodiversity by monoculture grasses, increases greenhouse gases, and has other knock-on effects like overuse of antibiotics. If we ate less meat but what we ate came from animals fed on permanent complex pasture, we could actually help biodiversity and carbon capture.

Farming of cereals and vegetables can also damage the environment but could help it. Eating seasonally and locally helps. A more varied diet including more beans, peas and nuts could easily be grown in this country. Crops can be rotated in the old way so they don't deplete the soil.

Methods involving less ploughing need more research. Allowing wild plants to grow alongside crops, planting land crops among fruit tree crops, and grazing animals in woodlands are all ways in which food production could help our environment instead of harming it. Modern scientific knowledge should mean we can do this more productively than in the past. It's not about going backwards.

The answer is not, I think, to take land out of agriculture and turn it into some sort of wilderness. We need agricultural land to be used for food and biodiversity and carbon capture simultaneously. That is far from a dream. Restoring our soil and water by good farming could reverse the decline in biodiversity and slow down our carbon use.

But it needs long term planning and funding and a lot of co-operative working, something we don't seem to get much leadership on at the moment. However, I am encouraged by the good farming practices on my local farm and the attempts being made by Barnt Green Waters and the Canal and Rivers Trust to take practical steps, and more elsewhere in the country. That change is possible.

■ I wrote the poem on the opposite page a couple of years ago to accompany an article that was never printed because of lockdown. The Withybed Poets had been re-telling old stories . . .

Little Red Riding Hood

Little Red Riding Hood stepped through the forest
Her basket was full of fresh baked bread
From the wheat that grew in their clearing
Where the forest had been taken back,
And cheese from the milk of cows, grazing warmly
On the grass that now replaced the trees.
There was a lovely rabbit pie and some sweet honey
All of which she was taking to Grandma.
She hadn't visited for ages, but now it was a pleasure.
She stepped carefully, hoping for a glimpse
Of the woodcutter, who lived by cutting down trees
For timber for the houses in the clearings. He was young
And handsome, so she wore her best red coat.
Her father had warned her about the forest. Dangerous.
Best not to go among the dark old trees
Keep to the roads, the longer way around
But she didn't care, walking on the bluebells
Hoping their scent would make her smell the sweeter.
There were dead leaves underfoot which spoiled her shoes
And she wished there weren't quite so many flies
But the sunlight through the trees was beautiful
And she turned her face up so it caught her smile.
When she got to Grandma's, it looked different.
The snapdragons and camellias in the garden patch
Were covered up with flowers she saw as weeds
Ground elder, dandelion, nettle and bramble.
She knocked the door. Come in, a strange voice said.
Inside, a figure in the darkened room. Not grandma. A wolf.
Who said "What a big carbon footprint you have,
Little Red Riding Hood. Your grandma has been rewilded.
I am here and the young oaks are growing back round me
Pine martens in the trees and beavers in the streams.
We all only eat what we need. But sad to say
You've killed and trapped the rabbits, scared off the birds
Tamed and hedged in the cattle and the sheep.
So put down your basket, little human, and welcome to dinner."

The anonymous birder

How to enjoy village birdlife

Let's go somewhere warm with good food this Winter."

"Great idea, the UK?"

"Perfect!"

Not a conversation we will be having, or birds either for that matter, but millions will be travelling to our relatively balmy shores and staying all winter. Not breeding this time, like our summer visitors, just feeding up in a less harsh environment.

Two good ones to spot as they arrive in plentiful numbers from mainly Scandinavia and Russia are the winter thrushes, fieldfare and redwing.

Fieldfares from the Anglo-Saxon "Fieldware" – traveller of the fields – are about the same size as a mistle thrush and to my eye combine blue grey, browns, black flecks and white plumage in a very stylish combo.

They have a haughty bearing with their bills raised and a slightly miffed look. They prefer worms and berries but if there is an icy spell late in winter they will forage in gardens, particularly for fallen apples.

Haughty bearing: A fieldfare makes the most of an apple tree.

We had one that returned to our garden for a few winters – birds have got incredible powers of memory and navigation – standing guard over the windfall, aggressively "chak chakking" whilst chasing gangs of blackbirds and anything else which dared to have a nibble. The poor thing got in quite a tizzy and must have used up more energy bickering than eating.

Redwings, some of which come from Iceland as well as the other northern departure points, are very similar to a song thrush but with a bold white stripe above the eye and a you might think, a redwing.

The rusty red patch is in fact under the wing on the flank of the bird. I suppose "redwing" is more catchy. They have a similar menu to fieldfares and both adopt a more veggie diet in the winter.

Like many migrating birds they journey at night and even in urban areas you can hear a soft "seeep" call in the dark which indicate redwings are overhead and winter is coming.

JL

Cooling into autumn

Alvechurch amateur weatherman **Phil Thomas** records the changes.

AUGUST saw another dry and hot start to the month. Warm sunny days gave an average maximum temperature of 24.5C, a whole 3C higher than the local average, with a maximum temperature of 32.4C on the 14th.

The first couple of days of the month brought 5.3mm of rain, but then there was no further rain until the 16th, when there was a marked change giving 43.2mm over a 24-hour period. This change resulted from a less stable airstream from the south.

The first half of September remained quite warm but also fairly unsettled. There was thunder on three days, the 5th, 7th and 8th.

Heavy, short thundery showers gave some heavy rainfall especially on the 5th with 20.2mm of rain over a short period of time.

The weather then changed to become more autumnal into the next couple of weeks. There were chilly nights and a heavy dew in the mornings, followed by cooler days.

The Outlook

Generally unsettled across the UK with a mixture of bright or sunny spells, showers and occasional longer spells of rain. Most persistent rain may affect the east at first and will become more likely for the west later. Any drier and brighter spells are most probable for central and southern regions.

The conditions are likely to remain changeable with further frontal systems spreading from the west and northwest at times.

After spells of changeable weather, October is most likely to see drier and more settled conditions develop across the UK. Periods of wetter weather do remain a possibility for some, most likely in the northwest.

August 2022

Mean Max	24.5C	3.0C above average
Mean Min	13.5C	1.5C above average
Mean	19.0C	2.2C above average
Rainfall	65.7mm	88% of average
Sunshine	185.1hrs	119% of average

September 2022 (to the 23rd)

Mean Max	19.7C	1.2C above average
Mean Min	11.4C	1.6C above average
Mean	15.5C	1.4C above average
Rainfall	32.7mm	50% of average
Sunshine	44.4hrs	35% of average

Pictured: Autumn mornings and misty starts as the countryside cools down.

More information at ***www.alvechurchweather.metsite.com*** You can see an improved HD weather-cam, updated at one-minute intervals, at: ***www.alvechurchweather.metsite.com/webcam_alvechurch.php***

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

FRESH YEAR OF EVENTS FOR VILLAGERS

THE ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY was founded in 1969 to help maintain the quality of life in the Alvechurch, Rowney Green, Hopwood, Weatheroak and Bordesley. The AVS helps maintain this high quality with a full programme of walks, talks, social events, litter picking days and regular footpath maintenance.

Monthly talks and social events are held in the Village Hall from Oct-June and are open to all. Entry is normally £1 for members and £2 for guests, including a drink and biscuit. Other events are by ticket and details published in advance. Walks are usually held on the first Sunday of the month (Sept-July) and start in or around the area.

If you want to support or join the AVS, membership is £10 per year (or £5 for young adults aged 14-20 years). You can get more information from the website www.alvechurchvs.org or contact the chairperson, Chris Miall at chairalvechurchvillagesociety@gmail.com

EVENTS

ST GODWALD'S Community Cafe meets every other Fri from 10am–noon at St Godwald's Room adjacent to the Church Hall, Finstall Road, Bromsgrove. Extra safety measures are in place. Friendship, cake, tea/coffee. Donations welcome— monies to St Basil's charity for homeless youngsters. More info: davidrowe876@btinternet.com

The twelfth season of ACOUSTIC ROOTS starts on Friday 21 October in Alvechurch Village Hall. The fabulous Stompies will be hosting the Gig and introducing more acoustic acts. There will be a Halloween flavour to proceedings including a ghost story. Still only £5 to get in. Doors open 7.45pm, but get there early as we sold out the last gig!
A date for your diary : the Xmas Acoustic Roots will be on December 23rd this year.

WYRE FOREST BIG BAND will be playing a selection of Swing, Big Band, Glenn Miller and Rock & Roll music on Saturday 8 October. This is the first time ever that a big band will have played at Beoley Village Hall, so make sure you order your tickets in advance!
On Wednesday 26 October we then welcome the JAKE LEG JUG BAND to the Hall to entertain us.
For both events, the Hall and bar open at 7.15pm with the entertainment starting at 8pm and we expect a high demand for tickets. Ticket price £12. To express an interest in tickets email ball-richard@hotmail.co.uk

MUSIC

ALVECHURCH COMMUNITY CHOIR usually meets in the Village Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm with occasional outdoor sessions and a live stream for members who aren't able yet to meet indoors. The choir is inclusive and open to everyone, whether you think you can sing or not. For more information or to join, see our website www.alvechurchcommunitychoir.org.uk

THE ASKLEPIOS ORCHESTRA, conducted by Lee Armstrong, will give their Autumn Concert on Sunday 27th November 2022 at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green, B45 8NR. The programme will include:- Beethoven Egmont Overture; Sibelius Pelleas et Mélisande Suite; and Mussorgsky arr. Armstrong Pictures at an Exhibition.Admission is free, but donations to the retiring collection are much appreciated. All are welcome.

BEL CANTO SINGERS, the well-known 4-part Worcestershire choir, are back to rehearsals at St. John's Church, Greenlands Avenue Redditch B98 7PZ on Monday evenings. They are always happy to welcome new singers. They have a very wide and varied repertoire and a huge catalogue to include pop, fun pieces, musical theatre, jazz, folk music and traditional choral and classical music along with much more. Bel Canto Singers are a friendly and social group, under the guidance of Musical Director, Liz Green and accompanist, Wendy Quirk. They are a non-profit making organisation and select a new charity each year to support both financially and with provision of their services. Just turn up at rehearsal on Mondays at 7.30pm where there will be a wide range of singing activities, light refreshments and chat. More information please contact Secretary Veronica Porter 07885 507899 or visit www.belcantosingers.org.uk

THE GEMINI Choir is seeking new singers. Info from Philip Morris on 07969 741137.

BLACKWELL Concert Band and Training Band is open to all brass and woodwind players of all abilities. To learn more about the band, book them, or find details of upcoming events, email blackwellconcertband98@gmail.com or visit www.blackwellconcertband.co.uk

SINGING For Health is an online group aimed specifically at people with health problems, mental or physical. It's fortnightly and completely free – all you need is a printer and a suitable device (laptop, phone etc).

BROMSGROVE Music Centre runs weekly sessions for young brass, wind, and string instrument players to enjoy being part of a group who rehearse and perform together. New members always welcome! Sessions are run by Severn Arts at St John's Middle School, Bromsgrove, on Mondays 5.45–6.45pm. Individual instrumental and vocal lessons are also provided at the centre. For more info and to sign up, see www.severnarts.org.uk/music-centre-groups

BROMSGROVE Folk Club meets on the second and last Thurs every month at Catshill Club, starting at 8pm. For a full list of events call Bob Bignell on 0121 476 5938 or see www.bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk

BROMSGROVE Rock Choir offers everyone the chance to sing pop, rock and chart songs – no audition needed. Free taster sessions available. More info at www.rockchoir.com or on 01252 714276.

continues overleaf

continued from previous page

BROMSGROVE Community Choir meets on Thurs evenings, 6–7 pm at Bromsgrove Methodist Church (main church hall). They sing for fun and enjoyment; everyone welcome, singers or not. Contact Ruth Henley for details on 01527 527022 or 07812 145267, or email r.g.henley@btinternet.com

DANCING

TANGO Argentino Thursdays in Barnt Green. In the Friends Meeting House. For further information: https://www.facebook.com/groups/tango42

AELFGYTHE Border Morris is seeking new dancers (female) and musicians (male or female) to join them for fun, exercise and dancing. They meet at 7.45pm every Weds in Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall. Everyone welcome. Come and play traditional folk music, or try Morris dancing. For more details call Pam on 07961 830 831.

FRENCH & Breton folk dancing meets at Alvechurch Village Hall on the first Sat each month from 2.30–5pm (Covid-dependent, so please check first by emailing alvechurch-frenchdance@gmail.com). Informal tuition and live music provided. New dancers (and musicians) welcome. £2 per session.

SEQUENCE Ballroom and Latin dancing every Mon evening at 8pm at the Longbridge Social Club, 1012 Bristol Road South, Northfield. Occasional free tuition. All welcome to a friendly fun-filled dance. Details from Kalvin on 07725 265024.

ALVECHURCH Morris Men are on the lookout for new dancers and musicians. They practise on Mondays at Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall, 8.30–10pm, followed by a "debrief" at a local hostelry. They dance in local towns and at various local and national events, and perform a world-famous (sort of) mummers play in the village every New Year's Day.
No ability, fitness or co-ordination required – if you are male, 18+ and prepared to spend more time than is probably good for you in public houses, pop along to meet the group! Drop in to any practice, contact Steve on 07375 592928 or email: alvechurchbagman@gmail.com

NANCY Butterfly Morris Dancers dance in the North-West Morris style (clogs!) and practise at Catshill Methodist Church Hall on Monday evenings ready to meet up with other Morris sides for social events and festivals. They are very happy to welcome new adult dancers and musicians. See: www.nancybutterfly.co.uk or Facebook for what they get up to. You can contact them via the website or Jane on 07726 915289.

AVONCROFT Folk Dance Group enjoys anything from barn dances to ones seen in *Pride & Prejudice* or *Poldark*. All welcome, no need to have a partner. The group meets every Thurs from 8–10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR. £2.50 incl refreshments. Info from Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or liz@the-stantons.uk or visit www.avoncroftfdg.weebly.com

BJ's BUSY Boots Line Dancing Classes: Tues 2–3pm Bromsgrove Leisure Centre; 7–10pm Stoke Prior Sports/Country Club. Thurs 1.15–3.30pm Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre. Social Dance usually 1st Sat in month at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane. It's a fun way to exercise. For more details phone Brenda on 01527 870151.

AMY Greaves School of Dance & Fitness offers a variety of classes for toddler up to adults. Based in Hopwood, Bournville and Longbridge. Contact 07979408997 amygreaves1@hotmail.co.uk www.amygreavesschoolofdance.com

CLUBS, GROUPS & SOCIETIES

BROMSGROVE Men In Sheds is a group for anyone (male or female) who has retired or been made redundant and wants to spend time with like-minded people. The group meets Mon–Thurs, 10am–2pm at Unit 1, Metals & Ores Industrial Estate, Stoke Prior B60 4JZ. You can find more information by calling 01527 570490 or email enquiries@ageukbrwf.org.uk

BARNT GREEN QUAKERS warmly invite everyone to monthly free tea, coffee and chat sessions on Thursday afternoons on 6 October, 10 November and 8 December from 2 pm to 4pm. Come to the Friends Meeting House in Sandhills Road. Parking is available on site, and there is access for the disabled. We hope that this winter, rather than remaining isolated at home, you will visit us to meet old and new friends for a chat and a (free!) cup of tea or coffee. It does us all good just to get out of our homes for a short time now and then. COVID has meant that creating friendships and making social contacts has become more important to all of us, and the Meeting House is a pleasant, quiet and comfortable place where you can meet other people.

PLACES OF WELCOME is a growing network of local community groups who provide their neighbourhoods with places where all people can feel safe and where they can connect, belong and contribute.
You can now find one of these hubs in Alvechurch. The network is open in St Laurence Church and The Ark on Wednesdays 10.30am-12pm, however you may find these in many different places such as community centres or libraries, and all are open to everyone and offer friendship and hospitality, free refreshments and local knowledge about the neighbourhood.
Visit www.placesofwelcome.org.uk or email info@placesofwelcome.org.uk

REDDITCH Military History Society usually meets monthly in St Luke's Church Hall (Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 4JX), 7 for 7.30pm. More info from Ron on 01527 545450 or ronnieg33b@hotmail.co.uk

FRIENDS Of Bittell Reservoirs is a group of local people interested in preserving the natural environment of the Site of Special Scientific Interest at Upper Bittell, Lower Bittell and Mill Shrub reservoirs, which are important staging posts for migrant birds and wildlife.
If you have an interest in preserving this unique environment and would like to help in its preservation and maintenance, contact: Charles Deverill on cdjd26@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH Village Society runs a regular programme of social events and guided walks, as well as maintaining local footpaths. Full details at www.alvechurchvs.org or contact Chairperson Chris Miall via R.C.Miall@bham.ac.uk AVS is always pleased to welcome new members—contact Martin on 07742 100007 or martinclarke1@btinternet.com
Join the AVS on their family litter pickng session on Sunday 6 October, starting at 10am in the Village Square.
On Wednesday 19 October you can attend 'Local rogues and villains' - a talk by Vanessa Morgan at 7.30pm in Alvechurch Village Hall.

REDDITCH Community Shed is a project that encourages skills, combats loneliness, and provides a sense of worth. The group is now in new premises, and you can find more details at www.redditchcommunityshed.co.uk or on Facebook.

THE MONDAY Fellowship group meets at the Parish Centre behind St Andrew's Church in Barnt Green at 2.30pm on the second Monday every month; £2 to include tea and biscuits and an interesting talk. Info: Maureen Frowley on 0121 445 0880.

INNER WHEEL Club of Redditch welcomes you to its monthly meetings on 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Southcrest Hotel Redditch. An international Women's Organisation, we enjoy a bit of everything; walks, talks, days & evenings out, and everything in between whilst at the same time helping our community. Contact Anne Robertson for information 07580351361. Or email redditch.innerwheel@gmail.com or visit www.innerwheel.co.uk

BROMSGROVE U3A: No longer in full time work? Activity/interest groups and speaker meetings are happening throughout the month. Check website for details: www.u3asites.org.uk/bromsgrove/home

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Welcomes Refugees is a group of volunteers supporting local refugees who arrived under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Relocation Scheme (SVPRS). New volunteers always needed – training and support given. BRWR is open to all, irrespective of political or religious belief. Full details at www.brwr.uk

ALVECHURCH BIODIVERSITY WALKS

MARY GREEN is doing more biodiversity walks this month, looking at the after-effects of a summer of extreme weather. Choose between Saturday 1 October and Wednesday 5 October, both at 10.30am, starting at the Crown Inn, Withybed Green. No need to book – just turn up. It's a slow easy walk looking at the environment, taking about two hours.

CATSHILL Carers and Bereavement Back Up Group is a group set up specifically to offer respite, socialising and occasional speakers to carers and bereaved in the area. It meets on the last Tues each month in the coffee bar area of Catshill Methodist Church Centre in Golden Cross Lane from 2.30pm for about 1.5hrs.
All carers and bereaved welcome, as well as those who used to care for someone who has passed away or is now in a care facility. Tea and biscuits/cake provided – no charge. Contact Sheila (0121 445 2813) or Di (0121 445 3595) for details and encouragement.

BROMSGROVE Speakers Club meets at The Barn at The Bell at Belbroughton every other Tues, 7.45–10pm. Everyone who wants to gain confidence in public speaking is welcome, but you must book in advance via www.bromsgrovespeakers.org.uk, which also contains full details of events.

RE-ENGAGE (formerly Contact the Elderly) aims to help isolated elderly people by offering monthly tea parties where they can reconnect or make new friends in their own community. If you know of an elderly person who could benefit, please get in touch on 07539 276054. Guests need to be aged over 75 and living alone, and must be mobile enough to walk to a driver's car with assistance. Find general info at www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk and details of the local group @ ContacttheElderlyRedditch on Facebook.

BROMSGROVE Photographic Society is a friendly, active and mutually supportive club for those keen to learn about, or improve, their photographic and digital imaging skills. The growing membership has skills ranging from novice to highly skilled, within wide-ranging subjects.
The club meets on Tues nights, 8-10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre. For more info, visit www.bromsgroveps.com or see Facebook and Twitter.

ROTARY Club of Bromsgrove meets every 2nd Tues of the month at Maekong Thai Restaurant, and every 4th Tues at Bromsgrove School, both 7pm for 7.30pm. New members welcome. For more info visit www.bromsgroverotary.org.uk or contact Ron Pearce on 07703 567982.

HEART Of England Speakers is a friendly public speaking club, based in Solihull. It is affiliated to Toastmasters International, and meets on the 1st and 3rd Tues of each month, 7.30—9.30pm, at the Silhillians Sports Club and Events Centre, as well as via Zoom. If you would like to boost your confidence get in touch via www.heartspeakers.org.uk, Instagram @toastmastersheartofengland, or via LinkedIn.

BARNT Green Parish Centre has large and medium sized lounges available for regular hire for some morning and early afternoon sessions each week. Please contact the Parish Administrator on 0121 447 7097.

MIDLAND Ancestors have resumed monthly meetings at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre (19 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, B60 1AS). More info at: www.bromsgrovebmsgh.co.uk

LICKEY Valley Trefoil Guild, as a branch of the Guide Association, is open to anyone over the age of 18. Make new friends, travel, explore, serve the community and help Guiding and Scouting in your area. The Guild meets at Barnt Green Scout & Guide Centre (off Blackwell Road, Barnt Green, B45 8BT) every second Weds from 2-4pm. For more info call 0121 445 3907 or 0121 445 2813 or visit www.trefoilguild.co.uk

REDDITCH Rotary Club meets Monday lunchtimes at the Abbey Hotel, Hither Green Lane, Redditch, B98 9BE. You would be very welcome to join in. Want to be involved, hear interesting speakers, and serve your community? Want to know more? Contact Peter Williams on 01527 60277.

LICKEY PHAB Club is a social club where people aged 14 and over, with and without disabilities, can come together each week to have fun! It is affiliated to national charity Phab. The club meets every Mon from 7.30–9.30pm at The Trinity Centre, Lickey Parish Hall to have

continues overleaf

continued from previous page

fun, play games, do crafts or just chat – there's also a tuck shop! More info from Louise Boother on 07814 122990 or lickeyphabclub@hotmail.com

BEACON Ladies Club meets at 8pm on alternate Weds evenings at The Hawthorns Social Club, Rednal Hill Lane, Rednal. There is a varied programme of speakers and outings, including occasional visits to the theatre. New members of all ages welcome. £12 annual membership, plus £2 fortnightly. Call Barbara on 0121 445 3456 or Anita on 445 3770.

THE WHEEL community room in Blackwell has daytime, evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire —more info on 0121 445 1425.

THE TRINITY Centre in Lickey has evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire – more info on 0121 445 1425.

BARNT Green Friendship Club meets every 2nd Tues of the month at 2.15pm at the Friends Meeting House, Barnt Green. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits. Members 50p. Ladies and gents both welcome. For more details call Rosalind on 0121 445 0598.

THE WORCESTER-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society are currently holding meetings online on the first Tues of each month at 7.45pm. There is usually a guest speaker. The AGM will be held on Tuesday 4 October. Non-members are very welcome to join in. Log-in details are always posted on the society website: www.wbdcs.org.uk and Facebook page: @wbdcs.org.uk

THE WEDNESDAY Club usually meets on the second Weds each month at Alvechurch Cricket Club at 1.30pm, and offers the chance to make new friends, meet old ones and enjoy talks, demos and visits. Info from Janet on 0121 447 7870 or Lis on 0121 445 3895.

COFFEE, Cake and Chat is a place to meet new friends or catch up with old friends (includes a dedicated baby area) on the 4th Friday of each month 10:30am - 12noon at The Wheel, Blackwell. No charge, donations welcome. More info on 0121 445 1425.

BROMSGROVE (1982) PROBUS Club provides regular opportunities for retired professionals and businessmen to meet socially and share common interests. A members' meeting is held at Avoncroft Arts Centre on the 3rd Weds each month, 10am–12noon, including refreshments and a talk by a guest speaker. For more info visit www.bromsgroveprobus.co.uk or contact Jim on 01527 833531 bromsgrove1982probus.weebley.com

KINGFISHER PROBUS Club of Redditch is recruiting retired and semi-retired men to join them in a friendly environment. They meet every 2nd Thurs of the month at 11.30am at the Court Leet,174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove B61 7AY, with a short meeting at noon then lunch followed by an interesting talk given by a visiting speaker. Partners/friends welcome to join for walks, trips, golf, skittles and special lunches. Contact Chris Bailey on 01527 835802 for confirmation of date and venue. More info at www.kingfisher-probusredditch.co.uk

LICKEY Hills Local History Society meets monthly at 7.30pm in the Trinity Centre, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES. Annual subscription £15. Non-members £3 per meeting. For more information please email info@lhlhs.org.uk or visit the website: www.lhlhs.org.uk

CINEMA FOR ALL

BARNT GREEN QUAKERS would like to invite residents to a series of film showings this autumn and winter at Barnt Green Meeting House.

- Saturday 22 October at 7pm
- Saturday 19 November at 7pm
- Sunday 18 December, matinee at 2pm

Admission is free, compliments of Barnt Green Quakersm and tea, coffee and biscuits will be served. There will also be a hearing aid loop connected to a cinema sound system for those hard of hearing.

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Soroptimists meets every 2nd Thurs of the month at Burcot Village Hall. New members welcome – pop to a meeting, email sibrsoroptimist@gmail.com or ring 07812 985927.

ALVECHURCH Historical Society has a planned programme of talks on the first Monday of the month at 7.45pm at The Ark, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch. More details from Anne Humphries on 0121 445 5955. New members welcome.

TARDEBIGGE COMMUNITY Hall for hire: large, bright facility for functions, clubs, societies and all activities. To book call 07763 446902 or email tchbookings@gmail.com

BROMSGROVE Astronomical Society meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at Bromsgrove Rugby Club. Doors open 7.30pm, speakers begin 7.45pm. Admission free on your first visit; refreshments available. Observing meetings are also held on the first Monday each month – bring your telescopes. More info on 01527 908331 or www.broms-astro.org.uk

ROTARY CLUB of Lickey Hills meets on Monday evenings, 7.15 for 7.30pm, at Hillscourt Conference Centre (NASUWT headquarters) on Rose Hill (B45 8RS). For details contact Graham Wiseman on 0121 460 1402.

SILVER THREADS, the Alvechurch club, meets on the first Weds each month at 2pm in Alvechurch Village Hall. You'll be sure of a welcome in this friendly atmosphere, where members can chat over a cup of tea. There are regular bingo sessions, and occasional days out. New members welcome. More info from Pat on 0121 447 8630.

WOODRUSH RUGBY Club "Old Dogs" meet at 8pm on the 2nd Thurs in the month at the Clubhouse, Icknield Street, 01564 822878. Open to all former players, social members and old friends for a social chat and the odd reminisce over a glass of beer. Join us: call Mike Betts on 07960 303254 or visit www.woodrushrfc.co.uk or info@woodrushrfc.co.uk

THE MACULAR Society Barnt Green Support Group meets on the last Fri of the month (with some exceptions) at The Parish Centre, behind St Andrew's Church, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green, B45 8NR, 2–4pm. Friendly, self-help group, proving there is more to life than this devastating eye condition. New members always welcome. For more info, ring Wendy on 0121 445 1585 or Alan on 01527 877864.

HOPWOOD VILLAGE Hall is available for hire for parties, groups and gatherings. Please contact Booking Secretary Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668 or visit www.hopwoodvillagehall.co.uk

BROMSGROVE PHOTOGRAPHICAL Society has hit the ground running, following their successful indoor Winter Season at Avoncroft Arts Centre, with the launch of the Summer Season. Members are taken far and wide with cameras at the ready, and the Summer Programme Officer has set out a varied list of locations to explore. It's a great opportunity to leave the cares of the world at home and be in the moment, in a beautiful and interesting location. You'll learn more plenty and there are plenty of experienced photographers to advise those just starting out. Visit www.bromsgroveps.com or email bpscontact1@gmail.com

SPORT, FITNESS & HEALTH

UPTON WARREN SAILING CLUB sails throughout the year at Aztec (Upton Warren) opposite Webb's Garden Centre, Wychbold. A small, friendly club with both mixed fleet racing and cruising sessions. Most members sail their own boats but there are also club boats available for members to use. See www.uwsc.co.uk to find out more or contact membership@uwsc.co.uk

JOOLISM HIIT CLASSES. Semi-PT resistance training for ladies only in a well-equipped gym in Bromsgrove. For ladies who want toned and strong bodies. Attendance must be pre-booked via julie@joolismfitness.co.uk

WOODRUSH RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB, Icknield Street, Alvechurch, B38 0EL is recruiting: Senior (Men & Ladies) U17 Colts Mini/Junior & Micros. Call 07341 256821 for recruitment or 01564 822878 (Clubhouse) email info@woodushrfc.co.uk or see: www.drushrfc.co.uk Facebook @WoodrushRFC

ALVECHURCH Village Society's walks are held at 2pm of the first Sunday of the month unless noted otherwise. For walks starting outside the village, contact the walk leader if you need a lift. Weather conditions occasionally mean that a walk must be cancelled: check with the leaders if necessary. Wear appropriate footwear. The next walk, centering around 'Memories of Hopwood' will be on 2 October at 2pm. Meet at Hopwood House Car Park, B48 7AB. Contact Adrian Smith 07941508881.

BARNT GREEN FISHING CLUB controls the fishing (both game and coarse) on the Bittell Reservoirs. Interested parties - contact: bgfcmembership@outlook.com or Facebook@Barnt Green Fishing Club.

REDDITCH & Bromsgrove Company of Archers meet April–Sept, Mon 6.30pm and Fri 6.30pm at Meadow Park Football Ground (by Harris Brush Works – outdoors) and Oct–March on Fri 6.30pm at Studley Leisure Centre (indoors). Really friendly no-pressure club. New members always welcome (juniors from 8 years old, seniors from 18 to 80+, seasoned archers or absolute beginners). Beginners' courses run throughout the year or taster sessions by appointment. Further info from rbcoaCoach@gmail.com, rbcoasecretary@gmail.com, or www.redditcharchers.org

REDDITCH Ramblers is a growing, friendly and sociable group offering a full walks programme including walks every Sat and Sun and a midweek walk most weeks. Sun walk is usually 6–9 miles; the Sat walk is more challenging, usually 10–12 miles. Midweek walks vary, sometimes morning walks followed by option of lunch or full day walking. The Saturday Strollers walk fortnightly (4–5 miles). Newcomers are always welcome and can walk three times with the group before deciding if they want to join. The group also arranges holidays, coach trips and social events throughout the year. Full info at redditch.ramblers@gmail.com or www.redditchramblers.org.uk

PHYSIOTHERAPY-LED Pilates Classes in Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green and Lickey Hills. Mixed ability Daytime and Evening classes available. Mother & Baby classes also run by Women's Health Physiotherapists. Small and welcoming classes aimed to improve balance, muscle tone and posture as well as overall body strength. Contact Elizabeth on 07850 604425 or elizabethalexanderltd@gmail.com or see www.elizabethalexanderphysiotherapy.com

CLUBBERCISE@ Alvechurch: Get sweat and glow! Get ready for exercise in disguise. You'll be dancing yourself happy and sweating until you sparkle, without even realising it. Mondays 7.30–8.30pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

POUND FITNESS@ Alvechurch: Channel your inner rockstar with this full body cardio-jam session. Using Ripstix®, lightly-weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Weds 7.30–8.15pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

RELAXATION & MEDITATION for Everyone. Short, welcoming & inclusive classes with an experienced teacher at The Ark, Alvechurch, and online. An experiential approach to relaxation and meditation for a calm, clear mind and relaxed, balanced outlook. For more information, contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085.

BARNT GREEN Sailing Club offers regular sailing, either racing or casual sailing, in beautiful surroundings at Upper Bittell reservoir. For info contact secretary@bgsc.uk or see www.sailingbarntgreen.com

BRIAR Rose Field Archers is a field archery club based near Bromsgrove. There are two qualified coaches for those interested in taking up the sport. For information contact briarrose-fieldarchers@gmail.com

YOGA Really Works: classes on Thurs evenings (term-time only), 7–8pm @Cotteridge Quaker Meeting House, Watford Road. Six-week blocks £45. Slow and mindful rhythmic movement in time with the breath. Accessible venue— classes open to wheelchair uses and less abled persons. Contact George on 07490 781637 or yogareallyworks@outlook.com, see www.yogareallyworks.co.uk or Facebook @ Yogareallyworks

THE RAMBLERS Bromsgrove Group: Guided walking with our group for pleasure, fitness and fun. Full programme of walks / events throughout the year. More info at www.bromsgroveramblers.webs.com or Martin on 01527 857117 or Peter on 01527 558203.

ALVECHURCH WALKING Buddies: join a regular local walk with like-minded people who simply want to go on a local, sedate and friendly walk with no pressure. Well-behaved owners and their dogs are very welcome. The group meets at 10.30am every Thurs. For more info, search for 'alvwb' on Facebook or contact Tony on 07763 468893.

SOCIAL TENNIS takes place at Rubery Community & Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, Rubery B45 9AD on Mondays from 1–3pm. The group would welcome a few more players – just turn up or ring Don on 01527 759 318 for further details.

SARACEN Cycling Club is seeking new members. Men, ladies, beginners, and regular riders are all welcome. The long-established club meets regularly by the Tardebigge Pub on Thurs at 10am and Sun at 9.45am. See www.saracenroadclub.com or call Ivor on 0121 453 2287.

LONGBRIDGE Cycling Club meets weekly on Tues and either Sat or Sun. Ride pace generally at 9-11mph overall average, varied distances. Hotel and hostel weekends away, cycle camping adventures, social outings and much more. All ages, beginners, and seasoned cyclists all welcome. Call or text Deb on 07738 982161, email debweston@aol.com or see www.longbridgecyclingclub.com or Facebook @longbridgecyclingclub

MERCIAN Nordic Walking: come and try a taster session for fun, fitness and friendship. More info at www.merciannordicwalking.co.uk Online fitness and personal training available at www.mercianfitness.co.uk

ALVECHURCH Cricket Club Pavilion is available for hire: weekdays for community groups/clubs/societies, evening functions/private parties. Licensed bar, dance floor, kitchen area and great outdoor space. Enquiries to Stuart Brereton via 07775 714165 or ahcc.bar@gmail.com

PILATES Mat classes and 1:1 (apparatus). Irrespective of age, lifestyle, health and ability, we could all benefit from listening to our bodies: tuning in to our needs, building connections throughout the body, focusing on detail; challenging what is strong, building what is weaker, balancing the body to move away from pain and discomfort towards greater resilience and independence.
Steff has 15 years' experience teaching Pilates full time. Book a 1:1 apparatus session (Barnt Green) or a mat class (Rowney Green). Call 07759 590830 or see www.steffaffleck.co.uk

BARNT Green Sports Club (Margesson Drive, Barnt Green, B45 8LR) offers racquet sports in a friendly environment, plus running and cycling groups. Clubhouse with licensed bar. More info from Nick Butcher on 0121 445 1978 or visit www.barntgreensportsclub.co.uk

CATSHILL FC offers youth coaching sessions each Saturday morning at Catshill Middle School, Meadow Road, Catshill, B61 0JW. Boys and girls from Reception age upwards are welcome. Contact Gary on 07462 118920 or see www.catshillfc.co.uk for further info.

BROMSGROVE & REDDITCH Badminton Club welcomes players for social and league play. Playing Sunday evenings 5.40 to 7.40pm. Details from Steve Whittaker 07805 051456.

PILATES with Lottie Newberry: Physiotherapy-led Pilates classes every Mon evening in Barnt Green Baptist Church. All abilities welcome. Contact Lottie on 07968 450673 or lottienewberrypilates@hotmail.com

COMMUNITY Exercise Classes at Alvechurch Baptist Church, run by Bromsgrove council: Active Seniors on Tues 9.30–10.30am. and Zumba Gold on Thurs 1–2pm (each £3.50 per session).
There will be some new things to get used to in the Covid-safe environment, with fully-

continues overleaf

continues from previous page

qualified, insured instructors on hand to help. For more info, call 01527 881289 or visit at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/things-to-do/active-bromsgrove

YOGA for Every-Body. Friendly & Inclusive classes in Blackwell, Alvechurch and online with an experienced teacher. A slow but powerful approach to yoga, which encourages free, natural alignment of the body, whilst building strength, flexibility and relaxed awareness. Contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085.

TAI CHI (Qigong) sessions in Alvechurch Village Hall on Mon 10–11am and Friday 10.30. Qigong is an integration of physical postures, breathing techniques, and focused intentions. More details Nige on 07966 069956 or nige@mindfulmoves.co.uk

FIVE WAYS Old Edwardians' Cricket Club at Ash Lane, Hopwood: Junior, Men's and Women's teams, come and join in! Open to all. Excellent facilities. Everyone welcome. Coaching for juniors on Fri evenings May to Aug. Contact Mark Tovey on 01527 835031.

NEW Ravens (North East Worcestershire Ravens Rugby League Club) is now based at Forshaw Heath Lane, Portway, B94 5LH. Junior training and 'little leaguers' take place on Sun mornings from 10.30am, with open-age and touch on Weds evenings from 7pm. All welcome at this family-orientated club. Contact Gail on 07515 020844 or Jason on 07957 248464 visit www.newravens.net

KINGS Norton Rhinos offers contact and non-contact rugby for children from Reception to Year 12.
A safe and friendly introduction to rugby – and plenty of outdoor fun and exercise! Training takes place at KNRFC Ash Lane, Hopwood, on Sundays from 9.30–11.30am. Contact Simon Thompson on 07968 424585 or visit www.knrfc.co.uk

HOPWOOD Ladies Cycling Club meets at Hopwood Playing Field on Tuesdays at 11.30am and Wednesdays at 9.30am. For more information, visit www.hopwoodladiescycling-club.co.uk or phone Sheila Evans on 07779 530017.

MARTIAL ARTS Kickboxing/Karate at The Ark Tuesdays 6.30-7.30. For more information please visit www.forcecombatmartialarts.co.uk

ASSERTIVENESS AND HELPING SKILLS
Donington Training runs classes at Alvechurch Village Hall. Easy, enjoyable and effective learning. Wednesdays from 19th January, pay what you think and can afford, any profits go to The Village Hall. For info: http://tinyurl.com/DTcdates or John Talbut (0121) 445 4607.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

BABY Bounce & Rhyme is at Alvechurch Library Mondays 10–10.30am. Sing-a-long to traditional nursery rhymes and action songs.

STORYTIME at Alvechurch Library is on Tuesdays 11–11.30. Silly stories and tall tales for pre-school children to enjoy with parents and carers.

DRAMA TOTS classes are at Alvechurch Baptist Church hall every term time Monday and at Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Finstall, term-time Thursdays. Rising Stars classes for 18 months-3 years are at 9.30-10.10am, Bright Stars classes for 3 and 4 year olds are 10.30-11.15am. See www.dramatots.co.uk for more information.

TINY CHURCH (stay and play for under-5s and their carer) meets in Holy Trinity Church, Lickey, each Weds from 11.15am–12.30pm during term times. Games, toys, snacks and stories, and a time to meet together with God. Just pop along, ring 0121 445 1425 or email clive.rushton@btinternet.com

EVERY SCOUT Group in Bromsgrove (which includes Barnt Green, Blackwell, Catshill, Finstall and Lickey as well as the town centre) currently has girls and boys aged 6-18 waiting to join, their numbers restricted by the ratio of adults to young people. A few more adults helping would enable existing leaders to open more Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer units allowing more young people to experience Scouting and learn skills for life. If you could spare a few hours each month please contact us on 07539 031740 or visit scoutshw.org.uk

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST (NCT) runs ever-popular antenatal and postnatal courses to grow your knowledge and your network, allowing you to feel prepared and confident moving into the next chapter of your life.
Discover and learn with other local parents-to-be, make vital connections and life-long friends in your community. Courses are held at St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green. Visit www.nct.org.uk/courses-workshops or call 0300 330 0700.

ROWNEY Green Pre-school offers learning through play for children from two years to school age, Tues–Thurs 9am–2pm, term-time only. Call 07522 926286 or see Facebook.

SOLIHULL Baby Massage is at Rowney Green Village Hall on Tuesday's. A relaxed environment for parents and babies to bond through massage. Follow them on social media for more information or visit www.solihullbaby-massage.co.uk

FINSTALL Pre-school in Finstall Village Hall, Mon–Thur 9.15am–1pm (term-time only). Led by a qualified teacher. Visits welcome. Call 07903 560787 or email Finstallpreschool@hotmail.com

RHYTHM TIME is a fun, award-winning developmental music classes for the under 5's. Classes in Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Bromsgrove, Redditch and lots more. Contact Vicky 07712 675 697 or visit www.rhythmtime.net

NEW ROAD Parents Support for parents of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans children meets monthly in Bromsgrove. A confidential, voluntary, small support group for parents by parents. Close links with FFLAG. Visit www.newroadparents.org, email newroadparents@gmail.com or get in touch via Facebook @New Road Parents Lgbtqi+ Support Group.

THEATRETRAIN Bromsgrove, performing arts for children 4-18yrs. Saturdays 10.30am-1.30pm. For a half-price trial email bromsgrove@theatretrain.co.uk or call 07766 724834.

GAMES & COMPETITIONS

SHIRLEY & Wythall Chess Club meets at Wythall Community Association in Silver Street, Wythall, B47 6LZ, every Thurs from 7.30pm. The club has four teams playing in competitive leagues. Friendly atmosphere. New players are most welcome, just turn up or contact Barry Knee on 01564 826250

SPADESBOURNE Bridge Club plays at Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, Bromsgrove B61 8DW. Join the group for friendly bridge in a pleasant venue on Thurs evenings, 7pm for a 7.15 start. They aim to finish by 10pm. Table money for visitors is £3. Details from Jan on 01905 772256.

MONDAY Bridge Club at Barnt Green Friends Meeting House would like to welcome a few new members – for more info contact the organiser, Des Clarke, on 0121 453 3034.

BROMSGROVE Bridge Club plays every Tuesday evening from 7.25 to 10.30pm at The Court Leet (a Hungry Horse Pub) 174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, B61 7AY. We are very friendly and welcome guests or potential new members, with or without a partner.
The club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union and the Worcestershire Contract Bridge Association. Contact the Secretary, Sally Flood, on 01527 832468 or sallyflood@gmail.com

BROMSGROVE Board Gamers is a friendly group which meets at 7.30pm each Weds at the Ladybird Inn, Aston Fields. More info on Facebook 'Bromsgrove Board Gamers'.

BARNT Green Duplicate Bridge Club meets at St Andrew's Church Hall each Weds afternoon and would like new members – contact Liz on 07538 092296.

ART, CRAFT & LITERATURE

THE WITHYBED POETS are local people who write poetry and share it with each other. You don't have to be in Withybed Green, though most of their meetings are there. They are now back to meeting regularly every six weeks or so. They like to read to local audiences and some write "poetry on request". For more information, contact mail@marygreen.plus.com

PAINTING & DRAWING If you enjoy painting and drawing, try this friendly community group which meets in the Rubery Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, on Monday mornings, 9am-1pm, catering for all ages and abilities.

'Two Onto One' photographed by Jennifer Margaret Webster

BROMSGROVE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

A month-long Exhibition of Photography is currently being held at Bromsgrove Library, on display are a collection of photographs taken by society members, including the photo *Two Onto One* pictured above. There are a variety of genres on display, for whatever your preferred photography style. The exhibition is free for everyone to experience during library hours.
Bromsgrove Photography Society meetings are indoors on Tuesday evenings, at Avoncroft throughout the winter. They are delighted to welcome more new members into the photographic community and BPS welcomes photographers at all levels with a focus to bring new ideas as well as tried and tested procedures into the photography of all members. Anyone wishing to know more about BPS, or to join, can email bpscontact1@gmail.com and check out www.bromsgroveps.com

The facilities are excellent for both indoor and outdoor working depending on personal preference and weather conditions. Tea and coffee is provided. Places are available. For further information telephone: 0121 453 7716 (Fridays).

COMMON THREAD: Bring your knitting, crochet, patchwork, sewing etc. All are welcome. Friendly help and chat. Meets on the last Saturday of each month (apart from Christmas Day, of course!) in The Wheel at St. Catherine's, Blackwell B60 1BN. Please bring your own drink to stay covid safe. Further information from Angela Bevan 0121 477 9924.

THE "CRAFTY Ladies" craft group meets every Monday morning in Alvechurch Library from 10am–1pm, with knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting etc. More info on 01905 822722.

BURCOT Woodturning Club offers a friendly meeting place for woodturners of all abilities and experience. A varied programme includes demos, talks, hands-on practical evenings and visits to exhibitions. The group meets on the first Thurs each month, 7.15–9.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Visit www.burcotwoodturners.org.uk

ALVECHURCH Library is available to host day and short courses such as card-making or scrapbooking. If you have a skill to teach or share and would like to rent a space, call the Hub on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

AVONCROFT Arts Society at Avoncroft Arts Centre (Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR), runs tutored/ non-tutored classes in Art, Textiles, Ceramics, Embroidery and Dance. Contact AAS on 01527 833829 or avoncroft-arts@btconnect.com

ALVECHURCH Art Group meets at the Baptist Hall (rear of church) every Tues from 1–3.30pm, using all mediums except oil. All welcome, especially beginners. Friendly tuition. Call Paul on 0121 445 5437 or drop in.

ALVECHURCH Library Readers Group meets in the library on the last Tues of the month from 2pm–3.30pm. New members always welcome. And don't forget that you can access online audio and e-books 24/7, free of charge, by downloading the Borrowbox app. Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries

LICKEY HILLS ART SOCIETY, a friendly bunch of artists and those interested in art, meet at Longbridge Methodist Church, Bristol Road, B45 9TY, on the first Sat each month at 7.30pm. Open to artists and non-artists alike. For more info email Lyn lyndasharp2010@yahoo.com or come along – the members would love to see you.

SEW TOGETHER meets on Tuesday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm during term time at the new Cofton Village hall. They meet weekly to sew and socialise.
All abilities are welcome and there are a variety of sewing machines to borrow if required. For more information contact Avril on sew-together64@gmail.com or see Sew Together Cofton Hackett on Facebook.

BARNT GREEN ART CLUB meets at Barnt Green Scout and Guide HQ in Blackwell Road, Barnt Green. Tuesday morning and Tuesday afternoon sessions. Workshops with visiting tutors during each term. There is a waiting list, but enquiries from improvers and intermediate artists welcomed. Jackie: 0121 445 4745.

GARDENS & FLOWERS

BLACKWELL Community Garden in the grounds of St Catherine, Blackwell. Pop along to help water, plant and harvest. Info on 0121 445 1425.

ROWNEY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY meets at the Village Hall on the second Thursday of each month at 7.15pm.
On 13 October we welcome as our speaker Reg Moule. Reg comes from a family that has been involved in horticulture for several generations. His formal training took place over a five-year period at Pershore College of Horticulture and has then spent more than 35 years as a nursery/garden centre manager. His abilities as a gardening communicator have been recognised by the Garden Media' Guild. Guests are always welcome £3.50 including refreshment.
For more information please do not hesitate to contact Lindsay Smith on 01527 5928784.

DODFORD Gardening Club meets on the 2nd Monday each month (except August) usually in Dodford Village Hall at 7.45pm. New members and visitors welcome. More info at www.dodfordgardeningclub.co.uk or call Penny on 07706 153618.

ROWNEY GREEN Flower Club, held at the Hall: You don't have to be a flower arranger to enjoy the friendly company of our members, while watching beautiful flowers being transformed into an amazing arrangement.
The next meeting of the Rowney Green Flower Club will be on Thursday 27 October. Angela Houston from Floral Scenter in Harborne will be demonstrating. The demonstration will begin at 7.30pm. All are welcome and guest entry is £5 which includes refreshments, and the raffle gives the opportunity to win one of the lovely floral arrangements. For more info contact Felicity on 07812 336263

continues overleaf

from previous page

BROMSGROVE FLOWER CLUB holds regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month except in December when it is the 2nd Thursday. No meeting in January. Meets at 2pm, at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B601AF.
A yearly membership is available or come as a visitor & dip in & out. Refreshments & then a demonstration of flower arrangements and a raffle and you may be lucky and take one home. Further information on 0121 445 1915.

SOLIHULL & District Orchid Society meets on the 1st Sat each month at St George & St Teresa's Parish Centre, Station Road, Dorridge B39 8EZ. New members and visitors welcome, and members are always willing to offer help or advice.
For more information or advice you can call Monica Johnson on 01926 747822 or email at kenneth.johnson99@ntlworld.com. You can also visit www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk to see more.

HELP & ADVICE

POPPIES' is a monthly bereavement support group — contact Rev Sheri Gidney on 0121 445 1185 for details.
DIVORCED/separated and having trouble seeing your children? Being excluded from their lives? The Association for Shared Parenting has been helping mums and dads in the family court system and problems over contact and residence for over 20 years. Visit www.associationforsharedparenting.org.uk

REPAIR CAFE is for those looking to save their money and fix broken or faulty household items.The Repair Cafe is part of an international network that keeps faulty appliances and clothes out of landfill and offers 'a cuppa' and a slice of cake to visitors while they wait. Visit the Repair Shop on the first Saturday of every month 2-5pm at All Saints Hall, Burcot Lane, B60 1AD. For more info: 07804251731 or repaircafebromsgrove@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH LIBRARY hosts one-to-one Computer Sessions for people wanting to learn the basics. If you need help with emails or advice on surfing online then pop in to arrange for free tuition, provided by volunteers. They can also help with online applications for Blue Badges and bus passes. For more info call The Hub on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

ALVECHURCH BAPTIST CHURCH will be hosting a lunch for carers and for those for whom they care on 12th October at 12.00. This will be a time for enjoying food and making friends, learning of opportunities and listening to concerns. A representative from Worcestershire Carers will be present to help with any questions.

If you would like to come on the 12th please ring either 07917 108934 or 0121 447 7369 or e-mail dlshoesmith@yahoo.co.uk

SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN STYLE

A local community group is planning to support refugees in style with a fundraising bargain fashion show. Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees (BRWR) has organised an event offering a range of outfits for women from well-known high street stores. Many items will be sold at discounts of up to 75%.

All ticket sales will benefit the BRWR group, which currently offers a range of support for around 30 refugee families from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, providing both financial assistance and practical help through a band of volunteers. This support helps families to get established in the two towns, and to start to create new lives away from their war-torn home countries.

The fashion show will be held on October 1st at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, on Stratford Road, at 2 pm. Tickets are £8 in advance via info@bwrwr.uk or £9 on the door. Donations to help fund the group's work can be made at https://brwr.uk

GUIDE DOGS are currently looking for volunteers in the community who could give a couple of hours of their time to regularly help someone locally and living with sight loss, get out and about.
Volunteer sighted guides support the person they are partnered with to feel part of the community. This could be grabbing a coffee, visiting a local attraction or simply getting some fresh air.
No previous experience is necessary, full training will be provided and the role is extremely flexible! For more information email MidlandsMSG@guidedogs.org.uk or visit www.guidedogs.org.uk

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

FINSTALL CROSS WI meets at Finstall Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For more info see www.finstallcross-wi.wordpress.com or email finstallcrosswi@gmail.com

BEOLEY WI meets on the first Tuesday of each month in Beoley Village Hall at 7.00pm. More info from Joan Lovett on 01527 584047 or email beoleysec@wfedwi.org.uk

BENTLEY PAUNCEFOOT WI meets at 7.30pm on the second Tues every month at Bentley Village Hall (B97 5TB). More information from Helen Spence on 01527 822611 or email bentleypauncefootsec@wfedwi.org.uk

BARNT GREEN WI meets at the Baptist Church at 7.30pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. For more information: Jenny Jellie 07983 865372.

BROMSGROVE BELLES WI meets on the second Monday each month at the Meeting Room at St Godwald's Church at 7.30pm. For more info, contact President Helen Holbeche at helenholbeche@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH WI meets on the second Monday each month in Alvechurch Village Hall, at 7.30pm. For more information email Mariea Clarke clarke.mariea@gmail.com or alvechurchpres@wfedwi.org.uk

LICKEY WI usually meets on the first Tues every month at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall (Trinity Centre), Old Birmingham Road, Lickey. More info from Jenny Ryder on 0121 445 1872, Lickeywi@gmail.com or www.lickeywi.wordpress.com

HILLSIDE AT ALVECHURCH WI meets at 7.45 pm on the first Weds each month at The Ark, Alvechurch. For more info call Pat McDonagh on 0121 628 4121.

BLACKWELL & BURCOT WI meets at Burcot Village Hall on the second Weds each month, at 2pm. For info call President Mrs Barbara Knight on 0121 445 3456.

FINSTALL & COFTON HACKETT WI meets on the first Monday of the month at Finstall Village Hall at 2pm. For more info call President Val Wheeler on 01527 874518.

HOPWOOD WI meets at Hopwood Village Hall on the first Thurs of the month at 7.30pm. For more information call Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668.

ST CATHERINE'S BLACKWELL WI meets on the 4th Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Contact Sue Barrett for more information on 01527 596092 or susan-barratt222@gmail.com

RUBERY WI meets on the 2nd Weds of the month at 7.30pm at Beacon Church Centre, Whetty Lane, when there are speakers, activities and competitions. The 4th Weds of each month is the craft evening. Non-members are welcome. Anyone can just drop in on either night. Contact Judie1055@yahoo.co.uk 07810765314.

FEATURE IN WHAT'S ON

The deadline for submissions for the What's On section in the November issue is October 16. editor@villageonline.co.uk

Above: Action from Alvechurch FC's fantastic comeback at Mickleover. ***Pictures/ Ian Macvie***

Cup run gathers pace

Alvechurch find their feet after fighting first-round comeback.

Alvechurch FC are through to the third qualifying round of the FA Cup after an inspired comeback in the first round and a convincing victory in the second.

They now have the prospect of a home tie against Nuneaton Borough on October 1.

In the first round, Alvechurch fell two goals behind against fellow Southern league premier side Mickleover, with the home side scoring two first-half goals.

The second-half comeback started in the 57th minute when Tyrell Skeen Hamilton curled a 25 yard free kick into the top corner of the net. The same player had a penalty saved, but from the resulting corner substitute Danny Waldron headed home the equaliser. Waldron completed the victory by heading past the keeper to book a place in the second round.

This was a home tie against Northern premier league midlands side Harborough Town. The visitors started brightly with long balls, and throws, into the heart of the Alvechurch penalty box but with both centre backs, Jamie Willetts and Ash Carter, dominant the pressure was repelled.

Alvechurch started to exert their authority, and having had a couple of half chances eventually took the lead when Waldron outpaced the Harborough defence and slotted past the advancing keeper.

The lead was extended four minutes later when Waldron doubled his tally from the penalty spot after a foul on Tyrell Hamilton. Waldron could have had a first-half hat-trick but his penalty was saved by the Harborough keeper after Ben Cassidy was brought down in the box. The second half started with both sides creating chances but the game was secured in the 74th minute when substitute Leo Brown finished a slick Alvechurch move by dinking the keeper to make it three. Brown completed the scoring five minutes later when great work by Jack Concannon created the chance to secure a convincing victory and a home tie against Nuneaton.

Alvechurch are also still in the FA Trophy, with their third round opponent still to be drawn as *The Village* went to press. In the league, AFC have found themselves mid-table with 10 points from seven matches.

AFC FIXTURES

League matches unless stated.

OCTOBER

1st Nuneaton Borough, FA Cup 3rd qualifying (h) 3.00
8th FA Trophy 3rd qualifying (TBA)
11th Mickleover (h) 19.45
15th Stratford Town (h) 3.00
22nd Kings Langley (a) 3.00
25th Bedford Town (a) 19.45
29th Ilkeston Town (h) 3.00

NOVEMBER

5th Rushall Olympic (h) 3.00
12th Hitchin Town (a) 3.00
19th Needham Market 3.00 (a)
22nd Bromsgrove Sporting 19.45 (h)
26th Basford United 3.00 (h)

Help for Jack

DONATIONS to help AFC's Jack Hallahan during his recovery from a clash of head in the side's first match of the season have reached £5,335. Jack has undergone surgery and the club says everyone hopes to see him back playing as soon as possible

Sunday squad appeal

ALVECHURCH U14s (boys now in year 9) are recruiting players to strengthen an established Sunday team. Good standard, with a number of players who also play MJPL football on a Saturday. If your boy would be interested in trialling contact Andy Padmore on 07500 125880.

FREE Dishwasher

with all kitchen installations*

1982-2022 40 Years

Kitchens | Bedrooms | Home Studies

AK FITTED INTERIORS

Visit us at: Saxon Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, B60 4AD

Tel: 01527 835924 | Showrooms also at Kenilworth, Knowle and Studley

www.akfittedinteriors.co.uk

*With orders between 1.10.22 & 31.10.22. T&Cs apply.